


# THE BUILDINGS OF SHROPSHIRE

VOL II  
THE TUDOR AND  
STUART LEGACY



LAWRENCE GARNER



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# THE TUDOR AND STUART LEGACY





# THE BUILDINGS OF SHROPSHIRE

Volume 2

## **THE TUDOR AND STUART LEGACY 1530-1730**

Lawrence Garner

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# Preface

During the last twenty years there has been a remarkable upsurge of interest in all aspects of the English landscape — archaeology, geography, natural history, architecture, industrial remains and anything else that enables us to build up a picture of local history on the ground. This interest has been accompanied by an unprecedented concern for conservation. But all too often the people who feel strongly that the best of the past should be preserved are diffident about their lack of specialist knowledge.

The *The Buildings of Shropshire* series is an attempt to provide the general reader with an introduction to the man-made structures in the Shropshire landscape, from hill forts to industrial buildings, from stately homes to cottages. The emphasis is on how to look and where to look, so each fully-illustrated volume contains essential background information and practical guidance for those who want to get out and see for themselves. Jargon is kept to a minimum, but a glossary of technical terms is provided.

There is inevitably some overlap of material from one volume to another, and this applies particularly to the descriptions of building methods, which have changed far more slowly than architectural styles. Readers will perhaps excuse the repetition, which is inevitable if each volume is to be self-contained.



# Introduction to Volume 2

This volume of *The Buildings of Shropshire* series surveys a very prolific period of building in Shropshire, a period which included some of the finest examples of native English tradition but which also saw the progressive encroachment of the Renaissance fashion that was to lead to the dominance of 'classical' architecture in the eighteenth century.

Architectural historians use a variety of terms in referring to the architecture of the years 1530-1730 — Tudor, Elizabethan, Jacobean, Carolean, Stuart, Restoration, Queen Anne, Baroque, Palladian and so on. I do not believe that the study of Shropshire architecture justifies subtle distinctions of this kind, and have preferred to use the term 'Tudor and Stuart' in a simple historical sense. Specialists will probably discover oversimplifications, but I hope they will bear in mind the purpose of the book, which is to help the general reader find a clear path through a field of study which seems to become ever more complicated.

The first two sections provide some necessary background information, and the reader is then invited to go out and look at buildings. For this purpose I have included itineraries of all towns which have an appreciable number of buildings of the period, and a gazetteer of the rural areas of the county. Inevitably there are some technical terms, but I hope that the combination of illustrations and glossary will soon make them familiar.

Lawrence Garner



# Part 1

## Building in Shropshire 1530-1730

The years 1530-1730 saw a dramatic expansion in the building of permanent homes in Shropshire, and we are lucky that so many of them survive to demonstrate the rich architectural legacy of the Tudors and Stuarts. The period is unequalled not only for the energy and confidence of its building but also for its remarkable variety. Conservatism was matched by experiment, and restraint coexisted with ostentation in a way that confuses our prim modern notions of 'good taste'. One reason for this is simply the absence of architects to dictate taste and style. Tudor and Stuart building, at least in remote areas like Shropshire, was the result of economic factors and individual fancy rather than serious intellectual theories. For that we should be thankful.

### *The Great Rebuilding*

Professor W G Hoskins, the pioneer of landscape studies, first coined the term 'The Great Rebuilding' for a period which he identified as 1570-1640, with a peak between the years 1575 and 1625. It was a time when new houses of many kinds were erected at an unprecedented rate throughout England, and Shropshire was no exception.

A movement which blossomed in the 1570s obviously had its roots earlier, and we need to look nearer the beginning of the sixteenth century to find out why the county's domestic architecture began to flourish so dramatically.

Henry VII became the first Tudor monarch in 1485, but the country which he began to rule with a new energy was in a depressed state. Civil war, depopulation, plague, agricultural depression and a lack of national pride had all taken their toll. In Shropshire (still not finally defined on the map) a long period of turbulence and instability was only just showing signs of coming to an end through the efforts of the Council of the Marches, based at Ludlow and exercising royal authority.

Throughout the middle ages Shropshire had relied on wool as its economic foundation, but the trade which had brought initial prosperity to towns like Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Oswestry had declined and was only just beginning to revive in the early 1500s. The inert state of agriculture reflected the decline in the monasteries, most of which were hardly equipped to survive, let alone run huge areas of farmland with their former efficiency. Monastic land had largely been let out to tenants who were only nominally supervised, while the manorial estates were content to practise subsistence agriculture on their open fields.

Thanks to the determined policies of Henry VII and his son, this situation began to change radically in the first half of the sixteenth century, and we can distinguish three specific developments that affected Shropshire.







*Three urban timber-framed mansions. (Above left) Bishop Percy's House, Bridgnorth (c. 1580) shows the wealth of panel decoration typical of Elizabethan town houses. (Below left) The Llwyd Mansion, Oswestry (c. 1604) relies for its ostentation on heavy jetties, extravagant close studding and elaborate windows. (Above) Raynald's Mansion, Much Wenlock, is a good example of the late survival of timber framing in small towns — most of what we see today dates from 1683.*

The first was the establishment of order in the notoriously violent Welsh border area. Henry VII, a Welshman himself, began to work towards the peaceful incorporation of Wales into his kingdom. Wherever possible the lands of the semi-independent Marcher Lords were taken back by the Crown and redistributed to more controllable men, and the process was completed by the Acts of Union in 1536 and 1542, which established English law in Wales and the Border.

The second key development was the opening up of free trade between England and Wales. This was particularly important for the Shropshire market towns, which had the facilities to handle a growing trade in Welsh wool.

But the factor most directly affecting the future prosperity of the county was the Dissolution of the Monasteries between 1536 and 1540. Whatever the rights and wrongs of Henry VIII's coup, the effect in Shropshire and elsewhere was to break up the whole pattern of landholding. Vast tracts of land were freed from monastic monopoly and were in the gift of the king and his supporters.

The redistribution was complex. While some new estates went to local men

who had assisted with the Dissolution, many were granted to 'foreigners' nearer the seat of royal power. The revival of the wool trade was perceived rather earlier in London than in Shropshire, and shrewd merchants seized opportunities to buy land in sheep-rearing areas, often from families who had owned manors for centuries. These new men were not like the old lords of the manor — they saw land both as a status symbol and as an investment to be squeezed for all its worth. And, of course, they brought into the county a much-needed injection of new money.

The result of all these changes was something of a social revolution in Shropshire. Freed from the grip of the feudal system, society began to loosen, and the traditional class structure altered radically.

The changes were evident at many points on the social ladder. The manorial lords had been basically subsistence farmers, working their estates by means of the feudal obligations of the peasantry. In the course of the Middle Ages these obligations diminished greatly in practice, but the manorial lord was still a man of power if not of outstanding wealth. The new landowners were men from a very different background. They were lawyers, administrators, city merchants and entrepreneurs, far more interested in living off their rents than in farming the land.

This in turn presented new opportunities at the lower end of the social scale. For many years enterprising peasants or 'husbandmen' had been accumulating small areas of farmland and becoming freeholders; in the general upheaval they had opportunities to increase their holdings, while newcomers joined their ranks, and as a result rural society began to show far more gradations than before.

This optimistic picture of energy, enterprise and new opportunity did not include the bulk of the rural population, the landless labourers. They had little option but to go on existing as best they could, and the general move to sheep-shearing did nothing for their employment prospects. The enclosure of land for sheep-rearing, which had started quietly towards the end of the fifteenth century, progressed with increasing ruthlessness, and those without property rights suffered accordingly. Heartless though it may seem, they become irrelevant in the history of building, since no trace remains of their flimsy, self-built huts, erected on land that nobody else happened to want at the time.

Shropshire was not entirely given over to sheep. With rising prosperity the towns grew in size, and small arable and dairy farmers found a steady market. But wool was the golden commodity that enriched the county, and the picture that emerges during the first half of the sixteenth century is one of unprecedented wealth in the hands of various groups, from great landowners to small-scale farmers. Included on this scale were the members of the new urban and rural middle classes — the yeoman freeholders whose grandparents would almost certainly have been powerless peasants, and the town merchants, some dealing directly in wool and others providing a whole range of commercial services for the newly-rich.

The main reason for the Great Rebuilding in the second half of the sixteenth century now becomes clear. There was the money to pay for it. But an important subsidiary factor was undoubtedly a new social awareness — a

desire on the part of those with money to distance themselves from those without, and to proclaim their new status as publicly as possible. For those who could afford it there was no better way to proclaim wealth than to build a mansion within a large private park or to put up an ostentatious town house (or in some cases to do both). Even those of more modest means had the chance to build the sort of small dwellings that were vastly superior to the hovels they had grown up in.

## *Country House Building — the Native Tradition*

Whatever their size, the majority of Shropshire country houses in the Elizabethan period had a common ancestor: the 'hall house' of the kind occupied throughout the Middle Ages by powerful men ranging from great noblemen to minor lords of the manor. Naturally these houses varied in scale, but they showed a basic pattern. The centre of life for the master, his family and his servants was a large hall, where the all-important fire was maintained (usually in the centre of the room). This was the place for eating and sleeping, and there would be a service area (usually a pantry and buttery) at one end, separated from the hall by a screened-off passage. The kitchen would usually be found in a separate outhouse. In the early form of this house the owner's personal territory might be no more than a raised dais at the opposite end from the service area.

Improvements to this basic model developed slowly during the Middle Ages, usually taking the form of extensions to give private accommodation for the owner and his family. A common procedure was to build a wing at the 'master's end' of the hall, consisting of a private chamber on the first floor and a ground-floor room that could be used for storage or as additoinal living space. It would usually be set at right angles to the hall and is known as a

*Tudor Cottage, Church Stretton, illustrates the hall and cross-wing structure common in smaller houses throughout the sixteenth century.*





'cross-wing'. This development might be accompanied by the construction of a first-floor room over the service area at the other end.

It was not until the development of chimneys that the hall itself could be 'ceiled' to provide rooms above it, because the smoke from the central hearth still had to escape through the roof. In any case there was a conservative reluctance to reduce the impressive appearance of a lofty hall.

Stokesay Castle illustrates clearly the domestic arrangements that were considered adequate for a fairly wealthy medieval household. The main room is the great hall, open to the roof. At one end a withdrawing room is set over the kitchen and serving rooms. At the other end a first-floor solar (or parlour) is reached by an external staircase. Even with an arrangement like this, privacy was difficult to achieve, and the persistence of such a lifestyle can only be attributed to the deeply-ingrained castle tradition of the owner living communally in his hall with his retainers, kept always on hand for purposes of defence. The tradition died very hard, even when defence ceased to be a matter of urgency.

Thus the hall-house was a design hallowed by the feudal system and representing the ideal of social status in provincial England. It is hardly surprising that when men of varying rank had the opportunity to build a home they should look to the hall-house as their first model. So the arrangement of a hall with a private wing at one or both ends remained, with varying degrees of elaboration, the basic pattern for the first Tudor manor houses and the farmhouses of the wealthier yeomen.

The smallest houses might still consist of a single room or a pair of rooms open to the roof, although it appears to have been common for timbers to be laid across the tie beams at each end to provide open lofts like large shelves for storage and perhaps for sleeping. The central part of the roof, containing the smoke-opening, would remain clear, perhaps with the addition of a canopy to channel the smoke.

The 'hall-house' pattern can often be detected in the design of more ambitious houses too. A main room occupying the full height of the house and containing impressive roof timbers was usually the central feature of Elizabethan mansions like Wilderhope Manor and Shipton Hall, even when they were stone-built. At a later stage the hall might be 'ceiled' to provide first-floor accommodation, with the rich effect of the timbers being replaced by elaborate plasterwork on the ceiling. The gabled cross-wing at each end of the hall was to lead to the characteristic E or H shape of many such houses.

It is as well to point out here that comparatively few of the new Elizabethan houses were built by very rich men. The vast majority were what we would now call cottages — small, timber-framed and unpretentious. They are so modest, in fact, that we tend to assume that they were occupied by farm workers, and no doubt in later centuries most of them were. But their original occupiers would have been yeoman farmers of comfortable means, who would certainly not have thought of themselves as living in a small house.

Because of the vast oak forests in Shropshire at the time, timber-framing was the almost universal method of building for smaller homes, but apart from one or two spectacular exceptions such as Pitchford Hall and Park Hall, Oswestry (burnt down in 1919), the large country mansions from the sixteenth century onwards were built of brick or stone.



Brick made a cautious first appearance in Shropshire with the rebuilding of Plaish Hall in the mid-sixteenth century, and of Upton Cresset Hall soon afterwards. Large brick houses had become commonplace in the south-east of England well before this, but it took time for the possibilities of this new material to be grasped in the western and northern counties, where there was no local brick manufacture. By the end of the sixteenth century brick was being used extensively for chimney stacks and other features in country houses, but it did not become widely accepted in the county until the Jacobean period.

Stone had a traditional status because of its use in castles and ecclesiastical buildings, but few men before the later sixteenth century were wealthy enough to consider using it for a large private house. The problem was not availability. The Wenlock limestone and sandstones found elsewhere in Shropshire were eminently suitable for building, but transport over the roads of the time was difficult and expensive. So too were the services of the masons, who traditionally commanded higher fees than carpenters. A stone mansion was only really feasible if a quarry could be opened up close to the site, and with so much oak available in the county it is hardly surprising that stone remained a minority taste confined to the wealthier landowners.

From the early seventeenth century, however, the fairly simple pattern of large stone mansions and small timber-framed farmhouses began to change. Many of the Elizabethan yeomen had prospered to the point where they could contemplate quite ambitious building schemes. One result was the substantial enlargement of original houses (Lower House in Worfield is a good example) and another was the Jacobean manor-house, a building of

*The Manor House at Grinshill (1624) is typical of the many modest gentry houses built in Shropshire in the early seventeenth century. Its twin gables reflect the trend towards symmetry, but the steep-pitched roofs and mullion and transom windows hark back to Elizabethan fashion. The bulbous feature on the left is a later addition.*





*Contrasting timber-framed houses. The small thatched cottage at Hodnet is of very basic design with windows inserted where the panels permit. Alcaston Manor has the same kind of square panelling, but its higher status is proclaimed not only by its size but by its showy patterned gables and elaborate porch.*



quite distinctive characteristics. Most Shropshire examples are of brick or stone and reflect the trend (discussed later in the chapter) towards formality of design.

They retain Elizabethan features such as steep-pitched roofs and prominent gables but are sturdily compact and are only minimally influenced by the traditional hall house. Symmetry is often achieved by a facade of close-set twin gables and identical flanking chimney stacks, and they feature the stone mullion and transom windows associated with the much grander Elizabethan houses. Embellishment is restrained or non-existent. Ewdness, near Stockton, and the manor house at Grinshill are two of many examples in the county.

The builders of these houses belonged to a rural upper-middle class of self-made man with their roots firmly in the land, concerned with managing their estates and having few political ambitions outside the county. Their houses reveal a social confidence that had no need of the ostentation of an earlier generation, and their self-sufficiency enabled them to survive the coming political storms that seriously affected the fortunes of more prominent Shropshire families.

## *Town House Building — the Native Tradition*

Development was rather different in the towns, most of which remained squeezed within their medieval defensive boundaries for much of the sixteenth century. Since stone was so fashionable for expensive country houses it may seem odd that in the towns timber framing was the almost universal choice of wealthy builders, but there were good reasons, practical and otherwise, for its popularity.

The standard unit of land was usually the traditional burgage plot, a long thin area stretching back from the street, and it was a major constraint on building. Unless adjacent plots were owned, a house of any size had to be constructed end-on to the street. This arrangement did not provide the wide facade necessary to give the stone house an impressive appearance, whereas a rich effect could always be achieved by decorative patterns within a timber framework. Shropshire and the north-western counties are noted for ornamental timber work, especially on urban houses.

Another factor favouring timber-framing was, paradoxically, the cost of oak. Towards the end of the sixteenth century there was a national shortage of oak, and even in Shropshire its price was rising steeply. But far from being a deterrent, the expense was a positive attraction to the *nouveau-riche* merchant, and this thought was no doubt uppermost in the mind of Thomas Ireland when he planned his ostentatious town house in Shrewsbury.

But the practical advantage of the timber-framed urban building was its flexibility. It could be easily demolished, rebuilt, adapted for an awkward site, enlarged or moved bodily elsewhere. These considerations seldom arose in the country, but the urban scene was more volatile and the adaptation of existing houses was commonplace. Extension could take place by filling in land behind the street frontage, by building sideways on to a newly-acquired adjacent plot or by adding a storey. The timbers of a demolished house could be incorporated into a new one, and in extreme cases a house could be dismantled and erected on a new site.



Apart from the urban ‘mansions’, usually built by the prosperous cloth merchants, many town buildings were speculative ventures and often took the form of retail shops, where the ground floor consisted of a storage area with a front shutter which could be let down during the day to display stock. There might also be a cellar or ‘undercroft’, a feature very rare in the country houses of the time. The upper floors would be occupied by the shopkeeper and probably by other families too. No doubt overcrowding was common.

There appear to be no examples in the county of this early form of shop (a well-preserved row can be seen in Tewkesbury) although many of the buildings have survived with their ground floors modernised. The ‘Abbot’s House’ in Shrewsbury is perhaps the earliest shop development now visible.

Whatever the status of Elizabethan town buildings, they would almost invariably have two storeys and often three, perhaps with the characteristic feature known as ‘jettying’ — building an upper storey to project over the one below. This practice is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a number of factors were beginning to work against urban timber-framing. The price of oak, already referred to, alarmed all but the wealthiest builders, but perhaps the most powerful deterrent was the fear of fire. Most Shropshire towns had experienced serious fires at various periods in their history, but it had been difficult to enforce the use of alternative materials. The increasing availability of roof tiles now made it possible to get rid of dangerous thatch, and most

*The Abbot’s House, Butcher Row, Shrewsbury. In spite of its name, this was probably an early sixteenth-century speculative development of shops with accommodation over.*





town authorities began to insist on elementary precautions such as fireproof dividing walls in new houses. It goes without saying that brick chimneys quickly became a standard feature in towns.

The seventeenth century saw towns expanding away from their huddled centres. Prosperous retailers and merchants no longer felt it necessary to live over the shop, and there was the kind of social 'distancing' that we have seen taking place much earlier in the countryside. Away from the constrictions of the medieval burgage plots it became possible to build suitably impressive brick and stone houses conforming to the more formal fashion examined below. It was fashion also that led to the seventeenth-century practice of building new brick or stone facades on to timber-framed town houses, a phenomenon that can be observed in any Shropshire town today.

### *The Influence of the Renaissance*

So far we have been concerned with the kind of building that developed naturally from medieval models, but the period following the Restoration in 1660 saw a growing awareness of imported fashion. Indeed the first signs of what has come to be known as 'Renaissance style' were already evident in larger houses at the end of the sixteenth century.

The smaller Elizabethan houses, built by local carpenters or masons, were essentially utilitarian. The external appearance resulted from the internal requirements. We have seen that the earliest elaboration of the medieval hall was an added wing at one end. This usually took the form of a 'cross gable',

*The small seventeenth-century manor house. While Renaissance fashion gained ground among the wealthiest builders, men of lesser means and conservative taste were reluctant to abandon Elizabethan gables and steep-pitched roofs. Despite alterations these three examples share a common basic style. (Below) House in Church Street, Broseley. (Above right) Cound Lodge Inn. (Below right) Chatwall Manor.*





producing a style which has remained popular to the present day. It was a necessary feature, not a piece of conscious design. Similarly the projecting porch typical of Elizabethan houses was simply there to reduce draughts. The front door was rarely central because it had to coincide with the passage between the hall and the service rooms. Roofs were steeply pitched because snow could not be allowed to settle on thatch.

The most noticeable feature of great country houses like Condover Hall (c. 1596) is the fact that the exterior (or at least the main facade) is built to a conscious design that dictates or ignores the interior arrangements. In other words the external appearance, and particularly the 'showpiece' facade, becomes the important new status symbol. It is a development that followed rather tardily on a trend which had been gaining ground in south-eastern England since the 1550s.

It originated in Italy, where artists had rediscovered the virtues of classical antiquity. Well before the middle of the fifteenth century, Italian architects had broken away from the medieval gothic tradition and were building in a manner reminiscent of classical Rome. They gave priority to symmetry and mathematical proportions; they rediscovered the dome, the triangular pediment, the classical column. Their roofs were low and did not compete with the facades. The rectangle became the dominant shape, giving a new severity to their structures. In contrast to traditional English houses, which emphasised height with their vertical timbers and steep gables, the new 'classical' architecture aimed to make the eye look from side to side.

*The ruins of Andrew Corbet's pioneering Renaissance mansion on the site of Moreton Corbet castle (c. 1579). The innovative classical features include the carved frieze between the two main floors, the attached columns flanking the windows and the pediments over the gable windows. The first-floor rooms were designed to be loftier than those on the ground floor.*







*The Library, Shrewsbury — originally the 'new' Shrewsbury School. The range in the foreground was built c. 1628 with classical embellishments, including carved friezes between the floors and fluted Corinthian columns flanking the archway. The incongruous decoration of the parapet appears to have been copied from the Market Hall. The earlier building (1590s) is at right-angles beyond the tower.*

Naturally it was a long time before this very alien style was adopted full-bloodedly in England, but some of the principles, oddly mixed in with traditional English styles, began to spread through the country from the 1550s onwards. Longleat, in Wiltshire, set a precedent when it was built in a pure rectangular form with symmetrical facades on all four sides and a very low roof, although the overall style is recognizably Elizabethan. Elsewhere in the country provincial palaces like Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire and Burghley House in Lincolnshire exemplified the new trend in stunning fashion. The earliest example of the new 'classical' architecture in Shropshire now exists only as a ruin, but enough remains of Moreton Corbet 'Castle' to provide a vivid idea of what must have been a piece of spectacular innovation.

Andrew Corbet started to build an ambitious mansion on the site of the old castle in the 1570s. He was interested in architecture and is reputed to have brought back the plans for his house from Italy. This is borne out by his projected building, with its attached Tuscan columns, its decorative parapet with pedimented windows and a subtle facade with slightly projecting bays. Apart from the windows the design was almost entirely 'foreign', and there was to be nothing so adventurous in Shropshire until the turn of the seventeenth century.

Unfortunately the house was never completed, but other great houses built in the late sixteenth century show more hesitant signs of being influenced by the new Renaissance fashion.

The most obvious feature adopted from Italy was the symmetrical frontage.



The 'cross gables' of early Elizabethan houses have already been referred to, and in the pursuit of symmetry these were frequently developed as projecting uniform wings at each end of the facade. Another early characteristic, the entrance porch, became a very strong feature when centrally placed and suitably elaborated. It was the large porch and wings that produced the common E or H shape, and not, as the myth would have it, a desire to pay tribute to Queen Elizabeth. Condover provides the best Shropshire example, although the design can also be seen at Pitchford Hall and the gatehouse at Madeley Court (both c. 1560). There is a remarkable elaboration of the porch at Shipton Hall, where it towers to four storeys, although asymmetrically placed.

This new sense of formal style was the result of a rather haphazard awareness of what was taking place elsewhere in the country and owed nothing to architects. It was still the custom to hand ideas to a master mason, who would use his skill and experience to turn them into reality. Moreton Corbet was a unique example of a long process of assimilation being short-circuited. Elsewhere in Shropshire the natural conservatism of master builders prevented the appearance of anything avant-garde, and Renaissance features seem to have been regarded merely as decoration to be stuck on to houses to provide a fancy facade.

A good example of this casual approach to Renaissance style is the Market Hall in The Square, Shrewsbury. It was built in 1596 and has the characteristic gables and windows of a late-Elizabethan country house, but the big Tuscan columns around the open ground floor are an exotic and rather incongruous innovation. The building that now houses Shrewsbury's library was also begun in the 1590s, and is another example of the move away from exuberance and ostentation towards formality and conscious design.

## *The Post-Restoration period*

The trend towards 'classicism' accelerated throughout the seventeenth century, a period that was marked in Shropshire by a slowing-down of the pace of building. One reason for this was the periodic shakiness of the wool trade, where fluctuations replaced the continuous boom of the sixteenth century, but there were also political problems. The capricious reign of James I was followed by constitutional conflict under Charles I and then the traumatic period of the Civil War, when so many wealthy Shropshire men backed the wrong side and found themselves in financial difficulties.

It was not a time to be investing heavily in grand new mansions, although, as we have seen, the first half of the century saw the construction of a number of small manor houses in brick and stone, and yeomen continued to erect their timber-framed homes. The towns, too, continued to expand, and some of the most handsome of Shropshire's urban buildings date from the first half of the seventeenth century — Ludlow is particularly rich in them. But even after the Restoration it was some time before the return to stability encouraged a new wave of major country houses in Shropshire, and when they appeared they were very different from those of fifty years before.

To understand local developments we need to look briefly at what was happening elsewhere in England.

When Inigo Jones designed the Queen's House at Greenwich in about 1616 it was the first example in this country of perfect Renaissance style with no domestic adaptation. Having visited Italy and studied at first hand the new architecture (and particularly the ideas of Palladio), Jones returned with a sound grasp of 'correctness' in mathematical proportions and the use of embellishment. He was the first real British architect — a man who confined himself to ideas and played no part in the practicalities of construction. His example inspired several other gifted men who blossomed after the Restoration in 1660. The structures of architects like Wren, Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh had unprecedented scale and magnificence, exemplified in houses like Castle Howard and Blenheim Palace.

These men were also inspired by Palladio, but their buildings were not Palladian. Wren and his colleagues were not content to follow pure classicism as demonstrated by Inigo Jones; they felt entitled to use classical models as a basis for their own style. The result was a hybrid and rather florid idiom that has become known as Baroque, and its main characteristic was the free use of individual features of Roman architecture in a manner that was not necessarily 'correct'. Where genuine Palladianism is restrained and often austere, Baroque houses tend to be heavily embellished with classical features incorporated largely at the fancy of the builder. It was this style that gradually filtered through to the outlying counties of England.

Needless to say, Shropshire was not in the forefront of the advance, but a group of large houses built around 1670, or shortly after, indicate a transition. Souldon Hall, Bragginton Hall, Longnor Hall, Great Lyth and Preston Brockhurst all incorporate classical details, and Rossall, near Bicton, (1677), was probably the first house in Shropshire to have the hipped roof characteristic of the new style. (Rossall, in fact, was built by a London merchant who moved to Shropshire, which may explain its advanced design.)

A more positive move towards classicism can be seen in Hampton Hall (c. 1685), Court of Hill (1683) and Halston Hall (1690), but the distinction of being Shropshire's first real Baroque country house goes to Cound Hall (1704). Indeed it is generally regarded as having pioneered the style in the Midlands.

It is an immensely impressive house, nine bays wide, two-and-a-half storeys high and with a basement designed to segregate the kitchens and other service quarters from the principal rooms. The roof is low and unemphatic, and a heavy cornice provides a firm top line to the carefully-arranged facade. The outstanding feature is the set of four giant pilasters with heavily-carved capitals. The windows of the main floors are tall and slender and comparatively unadorned, but the principal entrance has pilasters and an elaborate pediment. The house was constructed by John Prince of Shrewsbury in the newly-fashionable red brick with stone dressings.

Cound Hall set the style for a number of houses built in the early eighteenth century, including Davenport House, Kinlet Hall, Berwick House, Buntingsdale and Mawley Hall. (Note how the term 'hall' persisted even at this stage.) They have a family resemblance because they were either built, or strongly influenced, by the famous Midland builder Francis Smith of Warwick.

They must have seemed exotic and strangely un-English at the time with



*Late sixteenth-century brickwork at Upton Cresset.*





*Wattle and daub infill revealed in the end gable of a thatched farmhouse at Harley.*



*In the seventeenth century brick often replaced wattle and daub as an infill for timber-framing. This example is at Detton Hall. Judging by the very irregular framing this could well have been an interior partition exposed when a section of the building was demolished.*





*Bishop Percy's House, Bridgnorth, is probably the best-preserved Elizabethan town mansion outside Shrewsbury.*



*The bland rendering of the brickwork of this house in Low Town, Bridgnorth, has done much to destroy its character. Otherwise it shows all the signs of an early eighteenth-century attempt at fashionable building — hipped roof, quoins, deep eaves pediment with modillions, string courses between the storeys and big sash windows.*



*The Trinity Hospital, Clun. Built c. 1618, it incorporates new ideas of symmetry but retains the characteristics of the late Elizabethan period.*



their severely rectangular form and general Italian character. There were minor variations — for example, some houses of this period have the top cornice below the attic storey — but they all demonstrate a clear departure from native tradition. The roof has 'disappeared', the gable has been abandoned, the facade is dominated by a regular pattern of large windows, the traditional hall has shrunk to an entrance lobby, the interior is symmetrical and the service areas have been strictly segregated from the principal apartments.

There were many men of wealth and social reticence who did not aspire to a great house of this kind, but who nevertheless wanted to demonstrate their awareness of fashion. They were of the same mind, and generally of the same social class, as those who had been responsible for the small Jacobean manor houses. Their search for a homelier, smaller-scale version of classical style led to the Queen Anne style, now regarded as essentially English. These houses

*'Queen Anne' style. In the very early years of eighteenth century a combination of Renaissance ideas and traditional English features produced a particular type of small, elegant house equally popular in town and country. The dominant common features were the almost square plan and the big hipped roof with dormers. (below) The Guildhall, Shrewsbury (formerly Newport House) was built c. 1700. The porch is much later — originally the door would probably had a simple hood. Belmont House, Shrewsbury, dates from a few years later and retains its original street gate. Ash Hall is the grandest of the three, showing the influence of Count Hall. Its elaborate centre bay has giant Corinthian pilasters surmounted by an eaves pediment, with a segmental pediment over the door.*







were plain, square, compact and symmetrical, with hipped roofs and elegant window arrangements, and several survive in Shropshire — the manor houses at Cleobury Mortimer and Ash Magna are good examples.

The general picture in the countryside at the turn of the seventeenth century is therefore of a revival in major house construction in the new Baroque style, accompanied by the building of a large number of fashionable smaller dwellings. These co-existed with the traditional manor houses and the timber-framed yeomen's houses, of which many survived from the previous century. (It is of some interest that the school at Chirbury (1675) is timber-framed, illustrating the durability of that tradition, and hundreds of timber-framed dwellings must have been built in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries at the lower end of the scale.)

The final emergence in the county of classical architecture affected the towns as well, starting the process which was to change their character from the close-set huddle of timber-framed housing to the more expansive elegance of the Georgian period. Large urban Renaissance-style houses like Idsall House in Shifnal, Beaumaris House in Newport and No 41 Shropshire Street in Market Drayton began to appear even in small towns.

Apart from the new taste in house design, the major innovation towards the end of the period under review was the widespread adoption of brick as a building material. As brick manufacture spread from the south-east it became increasingly affordable by people with even modest means, and it gave a new character to the towns and countryside. It replaced wattle and daub as the infill for many timber-framed buildings, and was often used to build new facades for older houses. In the towns it was the obvious answer to the problem of fireproofing.

## *Churches and Public Buildings*

So far we have been concerned almost exclusively with houses because they dominated the history of Tudor and Stuart building. What is noticeable by contrast is the virtual cessation of church building during the same period.

The reasons are straightforward enough. By the close of the Middle Ages every parish had its church, and whereas in an earlier age rich men might have funded new ecclesiastical building or elaborate improvements as a pious act, the 'new men' had other things to do with their money. The English Reformation, too, introduced a period of religious uncertainty. With Rome no longer in control, and without a lead from the monastic orders, the building and maintenance of churches became a rather haphazard affair, and it was some time before new responsibilities were established and enforced. The upholders of the Commonwealth in the middle of the seventeenth century were more concerned with the destruction of churches than their maintenance.

These factors resulted in a long gap in the history of church architecture, and it was not until the Restoration in 1660 that the Church of England was able to make a fresh start. While there is evidence of locally-inspired improvements in a few Shropshire churches, the number of new churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be counted on the fingers of one

hand. Shropshire's two early timber-framed churches at Molverley and Halston Hall are of pre-Reformation origin, while those at Benthall (1667), Conover (1662-70) and Stokesay (1654-64) are major rebuildings. It appears that the only completely new churches that can be definitely assigned to the Tudor and Stuart period are Langley Chapel (c. 1600), Minsterley (1689), and Whitchurch (1712).

Civic wealth that in previous ages might have been devoted to building a new parish church, or at least a sumptuous chapel in the existing one, was now lavished on public buildings that proclaimed the status of the town and its merchant class. Shrewsbury's very grand Market Hall has already been mentioned; in this category also come Much Wenlock's expensive Guildhall (extended in the late seventeenth century), the Draper's Hall in Shrewsbury, the old Guildhall at Newport and the Town Hall at Bridgnorth, the latter sited in the middle of the main street for maximum impact.

If wealthy individuals were less enthusiastic about financing church building (apart from their family memorials) they might still be prepared to immortalise their names through the foundation of charitable institutions, and some notable almshouses and schools were built during this period. They have naturally been modernised at various times, but such buildings still tend

*Minsterley church (1689). The west facade is probably the best example in Shropshire of the indiscriminate use of new and barely-understood Renaissance features. Two giant stone pilasters support a big segmental pediment, the door has an elaborate frieze, the centre window is enriched, and four other windows crowd the facade to make up the symmetry. The church is built of the newly-fashionable red brick, with nave and chancel within a single rectangle.*





*The Guildhall, Much Wenlock. The oldest section (1577) is at the far end, built over a medieval stone gaol.*

to be among the most harmonious to be found in the towns. The Trinity Hospital at Clun and the grammar schools at Newport and Bridgnorth are all good examples.

Almshouses, of course, are not exclusively urban buildings, as is proved by the neat little pedimented row outside the church gate at St Martins, the group at Calverhall, the St Giles Hospital at Ludford and the magnificent Preston Hospital. But even when tucked away in the countryside these Tudor and Stuart almshouses tend to have a formal, urban air at odds with their surroundings — an air that marks them out as the creation of someone with an eye to social status as well as philanthropy.



## Part 2

# Building techniques

The history of building as distinct from architecture has not received a great deal of attention, and the books that exist are often less than useful because they attempt to describe national trends.

The fact is that until the development of standardised materials, building was a matter of local tradition, and the history of building techniques in Shropshire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries hardly conforms to the neat progression charted in the textbooks. There are three main reasons for this.

The first is simply a matter of geography. The London area, and to some extent East Anglia, were invariably in the forefront of new building methods, partly because many of the new ideas came from the continent and partly because there was a greater level of wealth enabling them to be put into practice. It could be several decades before new techniques finally reached the western and northern counties, and this situation did not change until books and periodicals became widely available in the eighteenth century, and improved transport allowed the rapid conveyance of people and ideas.

The second factor was the innate conservatism of local builders in the remoter areas. In an age when systematic training was unknown, and when skills were simply handed down in families it is hardly surprising that new techniques were regarded with suspicion. Even today innovation comes not from builders but from architects, and the profession of architect was unknown in Shropshire until the eighteenth century.

Wealth and social class are the third consideration. If we take a year in the sixteenth century — say 1580 — and look at the buildings that were being constructed in the county, it is evident that ancient and modern methods were being used simultaneously, representing most of the history of building at one and the same time.

The wealthy landowner might be erecting a large stone house of some sophistication and style, with stately rooms on two or three storeys, built-in heating arrangements, window-glass, an elaborate staircase and all the conveniences then known in Shropshire. The prosperous farmer might be revelling in the luxury of a new timber-framed house with four or five rooms and an unreliable smoke canopy over his only fire. His less wealthy colleague might be quite happy with his two-roomed house, possibly built in the old-fashioned cruck style and with a smoke-hole in the roof. The landless labourer would probably still be putting up a succession of makeshift, one-roomed huts on whatever site became available.

So although the sixteenth century was a time when better accommodation became possible for an unprecedented number of Shropshire people, it did not follow that building techniques underwent a radical change. It is possible only to describe the methods known to have been current in the county at the time, and to stress that there is no neat and tidy picture of steady technological progress.





*Decorated panels are a common feature of timber-framed houses in Shropshire and other western counties. (a) Top Farm, Knockin, displays the concave lozenge motif. (b) A house in Ludlow illustrates a variety of decoration — concave lozenges in the top of the gable, a frieze of plain lozenges just above the jetty and chevron bracing on the first floor. (c) A cottage at Prees shows chevron bracing with three quartrefoil panels in the gable. The term quartrefoil derives from the French quatre feuille — four-leafed.*





## *Timber Framing*

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were an era in which the craft of timber-framing, a justifiable source of pride in Shropshire, reached its ultimate refinement and then fell out of favour. As we saw in the previous chapter it declined partly as a result of a serious shortage of oak towards the end of the sixteenth century, and partly because the slow spread of the new 'classical' fashion demanded brick or stone. But it continued to be used as a simple method of constructing cottages well into the eighteenth century, often with the use of inferior woods.

Early medieval timber-framing relied heavily on cruck construction. This method involved cutting suitable trees to provide curved A-shaped frames, which not only carried the weight of the roof straight to the ground but formed a basis for wall construction. It was a simple and reliable method for low, single-storey houses.

Cruck construction began to fall into disuse with the demand for more interior space and the development of houses of more than one storey. Additional headroom could be secured by placing the cruck timbers on a stone plinth or on heavy vertical posts, but their inflexible shape was a restriction. Hence the emergence of the box-frame house with which we are so familiar.

Before considering the techniques of box-framing it is worth giving some thought to the raw material. A modern builder will order from a timber yard the sizes and sections of wood he requires, and they will be sawn accordingly. When an Elizabethan builder received an order for a house he had to go to the forest and select the trees, so that the timber pieces would require the minimum of sawing and shaping.

The consumption of oak was astonishing. It has been estimated that a modest timber-framed farmhouse built in about 1500 would have used up some 350 trees. Only three of these would have been mature oaks of eighteen-inch diameter; the majority would have been young trees of less than nine inches in diameter. At that time Shropshire had large oak forests, but it is easy to see why building techniques had to be modified during the sixteenth century.

It followed, of course, that the timber would be used unseasoned — in fact it was a superhuman task to saw and cut joints in rock-hard seasoned oak with the hand tools then available. This explains the warping and twisting which we now find so picturesque, but which must have been a serious inconvenience in the first years of a new house.

Having obtained his trees the builder would set about erecting the main frame, which he would have prefabricated on his own premises. The key timbers were the big main posts, set in pairs, usually at twelve to sixteen-foot intervals. They might sometimes be set into holes in the ground in the medieval fashion, but more often they were jointed into a heavy wooden 'sill' or set into a stone plinth. Beams known as wall plates would then be laid to connect the tops of the posts lengthways, while tie beams secured them crossways. With lateral and longitudinal timbers converging at each post, quite complex jointing was required, and until nails became easily available each joint would be secured with wooden pins.

Once this basic structure was up the builder could proceed to fit the subsidiary framework. Although there were minor variations according to locality, two basic methods predominated.

In the early sixteenth century before the timber shortage (and later if the client wanted to display conspicuous expenditure) he would probably use the 'close-studding' method. This involved the setting of vertical timbers or

*The crucks show up clearly in the end of this single-bay cottage at Loppington.*





'studs' close together within the main frame, and these timbers would either extend to storey height or be divided by a horizontal member half way up. Very often this part of the work could be prefabricated as a series of 'screens', each of which would be inserted into the main frame in one piece.

Close-studding was very effective in stiffening the house frame and produced secure walls with good load-bearing qualities. It also needed very little infilling between the timbers. In Britain as a whole, the technique was widespread in East Anglia and very common in the south-east. In the western counties it was certainly known and used, but it is far more common to find the alternative method known by various names but here called 'post and truss'.

In this kind of structure the main beams would be fixed as before, but lighter vertical and horizontal timbers would be inserted to form square or rectangular panels. Obviously this did not stiffen the structure as securely as close studding, and diagonal braces were needed at intervals. Quite large areas were left for infilling. The term 'post and truss' arises from the fact that the timbers taking the weight of the roof had to be supported on the posts, since the walls were not loadbearing. (Roofing is considered in more detail later in the chapter.)

Houses built in the square-panelled post and truss style can be seen throughout the Shropshire countryside. Close-studding is more evident in the town houses built for affluent merchants, although it was not necessarily a first choice since square panelling could provide an opportunity for rich decoration. To appreciate the two different approaches one need only look at Ireland's Mansion and Owen's Mansion, confronting each other in Shrewsbury. In any case, a study of the sides and backs of town houses with

*Square panel technique illustrated by a house on the outskirts of Craven Arms. The big external chimney is a later addition.*







*This newly-restored farmhouse near Claverley provides a superb example of close studding. It is a technique far more common in the east and south of England than in Shropshire.*

*Jetties on Bodenham's shop, Broad Street, Ludlow.*



close-studded facades will often reveal cheaper square panelling. The early 'Abbot's House' in Shrewsbury has close studding on the first floor and square panelling on the second, a practical combination which ensured a lighter top storey, and this mixture of styles is not uncommon, although in country houses it usually indicates a later extension.

The wealth of decorated panelling in timber-framed houses is one of the outstanding features of the north-western counties, and its many varieties will be examined later in the book.

The construction of a second storey presented problems to medieval builders. It was fairly easy to put up a second frame directly on top of the first, although the weight of additional timber, plus the weight of the roof, could put a severe strain on the joints in a high wind. The difficulty lay with the floor joists of the upper storey. Nowadays joists of rectangular section are installed with the short side up to minimise springing; medieval and Elizabethan carpenters invariably laid them flat like planks in order to achieve a better joint at each end. Under the weight of people or furniture they could bend alarmingly.

The attempted solution was to support the joists with a long beam beneath them, but since this would also be laid flat it was only a matter of time before it too started to bend. A more satisfactory answer was found with the development of 'jetties', which were known in the fifteenth century but which came into wide use after 1500.

'Jettying' is the technique by which each upper storey projects beyond the one beneath. In our childhood history books we were told that this enabled people to lean out of the top storeys of town houses and shake hands across the street. This was certainly true, and Shrewsbury's Grope Lane proves the point. The usual reasons given for these projecting storeys were that the walls of the house would be protected from rain and that the upper rooms could be made bigger without obstructing the street.

Both these reasons are valid, but they hardly apply to country houses, where jettying was quite common. In fact one reason for the projecting jetties may have been to provide a firmer floor. If the first-floor timbers rested on their ends, the weight of people and furniture inside was counterbalanced and the joists lost most of their 'spring'. Another good reason for jettying was that it provided a new beam (a 'bressumer') in which to joint the vertical timbers for the upper storey.

While it was simple enough to extend the joists at the front of a house, there were complications if jettying had to be provided at the sides as well. The solution was a diagonal beam (a 'dragon beam') into which joists could be set at right angles to each other. Additional support for the dragon beam was usually provided by substantial external brackets at each corner. (The building on the corner of King Street and Broad Street in Ludlow provides an excellent example.)

The need to fill in the structural panels has already been mentioned, and the most popular method was to use some kind of wattle and daub. Grooves were made in the timbers to hold laths, which would be woven to form a solid screen and then plastered with a mixture of mud (clay where possible) and anything else that might help to stiffen the mixture. Straw, horsehair, dung and flax were commonly used, and lime plaster might be applied as a final

protective coat. There is evidence of stone being used occasionally as a filler, and in the late sixteenth century the original wattle and daub was often replaced by bricks, which must have improved considerably the load-bearing properties of the timber frame.

The house timbers would be left exposed to the weather, and would eventually take on the silvery look of well-seasoned oak. There is evidence that they were sometimes painted with a colour wash for cosmetic effect, but black timbers were a nineteenth-century development made possible by the invention of a tar-based black waterproofing compound. In restoring timber-framed houses the authentic treatment is to remove the black covering and expose the bare oak, which requires no protection from the weather.

## *Building with Stone*

From the Saxon period to the end of the seventeenth century the stonemason was the aristocrat among builders. He was responsible not only for the basic technology of cathedrals, abbeys, parish churches and castles but also for the magnificent decoration which adorned the ecclesiastical buildings of the Middle Ages. The most eminent masons were also the architects of their day, working with (and no doubt often overruling) the experts of the Church who were ostensibly responsible for design.

It was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the mason ceased to be employed primarily by the Church and was required to turn his attention to the building of elaborate houses. It would be interesting to know to what extent the building of a large house presented a new challenge. Where did the Shropshire masons gain their experience? There had been little if any church construction after 1530 and few secular opportunities to work on a large building, apart from repairs. Perhaps the answer is that they travelled outside the county as young men, working under master masons on some of the great houses that were being erected well before the new wave of Shropshire building.

It was the task of the master mason to ensure that the potential owner's wishes were feasible and that the planned building could be constructed on sound principles. He rarely did any stone-laying himself, and would usually be engaged in supervising several projects simultaneously, providing measurements and deciding the techniques to be used -- in fact carrying out the functions of the modern architect.

His skilled under-masons would be using methods that had hardly changed for centuries, and which largely survive to the present day. The walls of the building were constructed as two 'skins', producing something like the modern cavity wall, although in this case the cavity would be packed with small rubble to prevent the two sides from collapsing inwards. At intervals 'tie-stones' would be placed across the double wall to hold the two sides together. In good-class work the stones would be bedded in lime mortar, but elsewhere clay might be used.

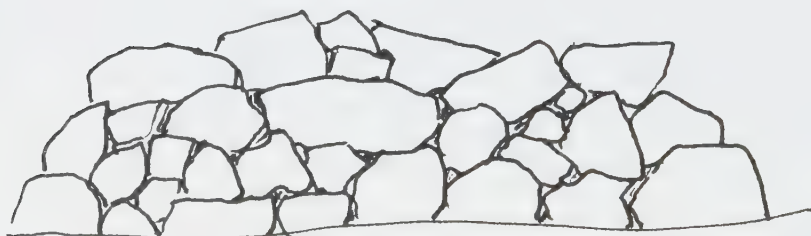
Unlike modern non-specialist builders, the early masons would never rely on mortar to hold the stones in place; what kept the walls stable was the skill that went into the laying of the stones so that they bonded firmly together



## STONELAYING TECHNIQUES



**Coursed rubble**



**Random rubble**



**Ashlar**

*The three most common masonry techniques.*

under their own weight. The main virtue of mortar or mud was that it provided a form of draughtproofing.

The stone the mason was working with could arrive in various forms, depending on the quality of the job. Good building stone will usually break out in the quarry with at least one straight side, but it might have been given additional 'dressing' to provide a presentable external face. On cheaper jobs he might be expected to 'face' each stone roughly as he used it, a process that was not too difficult with the Shropshire limestones and sandstones. For the

most prestigious work the stones for the external face would be shaped and squared to a uniform size at the quarry.

The modern bricklayer building a cavity wall will use good quality 'face bricks' on the outside and inferior brick on the inside, and the stonemason followed the same principle. He would 'put his best face forward', knowing that the less tidy interior face would be plastered.

Stone-laying technique depended entirely on the nature of the stone, and in Shropshire it is possible to see two main methods.

'Ashlar' masonry involved the use of stones carefully dressed at the quarry. It was extremely expensive, but the result was the very superior appearance of uniform rectangular stones laid in perfectly level courses and with very thin mortar joints. Sixteenth-century ashlar work is quite rare in Shropshire (Conover Hall and the Langley Chapel are examples) but the influence of Renaissance ideas made it virtually imperative in the larger houses of the seventeenth century, where it often took the form of thin slabs used to face irregular stonework.

More often the stones would be laid in their natural shapes and sizes, a method known as 'rubble masonry'. (This term did not necessarily denote inferior work — after all, many of the great ecclesiastical buildings of the Middle Ages involved rubble construction.) If the material permitted, it was usual to attempt 'coursed rubble' laying, where the stones would be selected for height, set in rough horizontal courses and levelled off occasionally with flat pieces. Where the stones showed no uniformity of size or shape a 'random rubble' technique would be used, with the stones laid wherever they fitted best and with no attempt at coursing.

Coursed work was always preferred because it produced securer bonding. The essential thing was to bond the stones laterally and longitudinally. Lateral bonding was achieved by using tie stones and by laying stones with their length into the wall so that they were firmly locked into place by the weight on top of them. Longitudinal bonding depended on each joint between stones being covered by a stone on the top as in brickwork, and this was always easier to achieve by the use of regular courses. Failure to do it resulted in vertical cracks along which the stones could 'burst'.

In stone-built houses the potential weak points are at the angles and in the openings for doors and windows. For this reason the mason would select special long stones and shape them into rectangular form and uniform size to give strength and neatness to the corners. These 'quoins' later became a decorative feature, often projecting slightly from the face of the walls. The same technique was used in miniature at door and window jambs, leading again to various kinds of decorative treatment. (It is noticeable that in the brick houses of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries stone was normally used for quoins, partly for ornamental reasons but also reflecting early suspicion about the bonding powers of bricks.)

These techniques were part of the mason's basic training, but he would often be called upon to demonstrate skills of a higher order. Even in fairly simple Elizabethan houses he would have to fashion the mullions and transoms that held the window glass, and to produce moulded surrounds for doors and windows. Throughout the seventeenth century he would be required to cope with increasingly strange and complex work, such as

fashioning classical columns, pilasters, elaborate cornices or balustraded parapets. The most talented masons came near to being sculptors. Such was the degree of skill which the English masons developed that their work was often attributed in quite recent times to imported foreign craftsmen.

So perhaps the final point to be made about Tudor and Stuart stonemasonry is the adaptability of its practitioners. The development of timber-framing demanded increasingly refined skills, but the carpenter never had to face the revolution in technique illustrated by a comparison between the traditional, homely Englishness of Benthall Hall and the Baroque embellishments of Cound Hall.

## *Building with Brick*

The fact that brick construction came late to Shropshire has already been mentioned. Its use at Plaish Hall in about 1540 and at Upton Cresset soon afterwards did not lead to widespread imitation, and the question that arises is who laid the bricks? The likely answer is that a gang was imported from another part of the country, and that they stayed on to work at Upton Cresset.

There is no doubt that thirty or forty years later local bricklayers were in demand, and they were probably drawn from the ranks of the stonemasons. The early bricklaying system, known as English Bond, is a reflection of the masons' methods described above, and also an indication that they did not trust the newfangled material.

A brick used with its long face showing is known as a 'stretcher', while one with its end showing is a 'header'. English Bond consisted of building a double skin with no cavity, with one course of bricks laid along the wall and the next course laid across — in other words, alternating courses of stretchers and headers. This certainly produced a firm bond but used a very large number of bricks. As confidence grew, more economical methods appeared with, for example, a course of headers for every three or four courses of stretchers. During the seventeenth century English Bond began to be replaced by Flemish Bond, in which each course consisted of alternate stretchers and headers. (Variations of this technique were used until the twentieth century, when the introduction of cavity walls led to the modern practice of laying stretchers only.)

Although documentary evidence is lacking, it seems certain that during the last quarter of the sixteenth century brick manufacture must have started in Shropshire. A few rich men might have been able to import bricks, but the number of brick chimneys added to existing houses points to local sources of supply. We know from studies elsewhere in England that brickworks would have operated on a very small scale — possibly one or two men digging out suitable clays, mixing them, pressing the mixture into moulds and then burning the raw blocks in a clamp. The results must have been of dubious quality, but even poor bricks stood up to heat better than the local stone or the mud mixtures of primitive chimneys.

Transport was a problem with all building materials, and it had long been the practice to open a small quarry near the site before work began on a large stone-built house. It is evident that the same procedure occurred in the case



## BRICK BONDING



**English Bond**



**Flemish Bond**

*Brick bonds — English and Flemish.*

of large brick buildings in the countryside, and the availability of clay was a deciding factor in their location. The small scale of supply and the uncertain quality in the early days no doubt explains the limited use of brick in Shropshire until the second half of the seventeenth century. By the time it became a fashionable building material for large country houses the manufacturing process had expanded and expertise had improved.

Even before it gained widespread acceptance, the Elizabethans had come to appreciate the ornamental possibilities of brick when used in chimney construction. The hit-and-miss production methods resulted in a variety of colours, which could be exploited for patterning, and the bricks could be laid to form unusual shapes. These two factors produced the decorative and sometimes fantastic chimneys that are a feature of so many Elizabethan houses.

## Roofs

The technology of the roof is a complicated subject, and there is little point in delving too far into the technicalities. Until the early eighteenth century the roofs of most English provincial houses were steep-pitched, a tradition dating from the time when thatch was the universal roofing material. Thatch is surprisingly heavy in itself, and becomes very heavy indeed when wet. The priority, therefore, was to ensure that snow was shed quickly and that as much rain as possible ran off.

The principles of roof construction were mastered well before the Middle Ages, but we have only to look at medieval cathedrals and churches to see that great value was attached to the aesthetic qualities of the roof as well as to its strength. It was not until the general adoption of ceilings that roof design became utilitarian, and it is evident that the people of the Tudor and Stuart period retained memories of the finely-timbered Great Hall as a symbol of social status. So even in the most unpretentious yeoman's house some attempt was made to give the roof timbers a pleasing design as well as structural strength.

The basic problem of a roof is that its weight has to be conveyed securely to the ground. Cruck construction, as we have seen, did this simply and efficiently, but if the timbers were to be high and clear of the living space it was necessary to support them on the walls. With stone or brick walls this presented no great difficulty, but the square-panelled type of timber framing did not produce load-bearing walls.

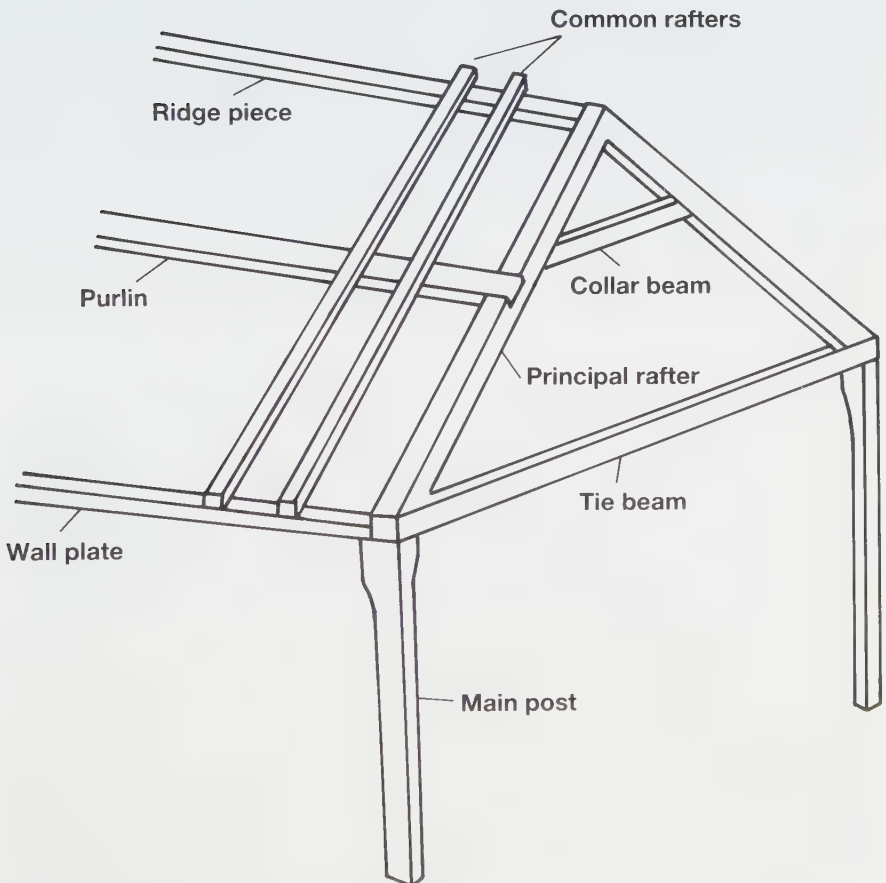
It was obvious that the weight must be taken by the main posts of the house, but there were very few of these — four in a single-room house, six in a two-bay house and so on. Hence the development of the roof truss, a

*Elizabethan chimneys at Pitchford Hall. Note also the close studding in the long elevation contrasting with the chevron and lozenge bracing providing a decorative end wall.*



triangular arrangement of heavy timbers supported on the pairs of wall posts and taking most of the weight of the roof. The base of the triangle was some form of tie-beam, necessary to prevent the pitched timbers (the 'principal rafters') from moving apart at the base and taking the walls with them.

The early trusses were linked together by a single long purlin near the ridge, and a few intermediate rafters could rest with reasonable safety on the wall plates. Light battens were then fixed across the rafters to support the thatch. This arrangement was considerably improved when it was realised that the purlins could be set into the sloping sides of the trusses to take the weight of any number of rafters, which rested almost weightlessly on the walls.



**BASIC ROOF CONSTRUCTION**



This method became essential with the introduction of much heavier roofing materials such as stone slabs or tiles, and with minor modifications it has remained the basis of roof construction to the present day. But the aesthetic appeal of roof timbers remained an important consideration throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Most of the larger houses of the period boast timbers that are works of art in themselves, although many were to be hidden behind new ornamented plaster ceilings.

There is very little evidence about changing methods of roof covering. It is likely that well into the sixteenth century almost all Shropshire's town and country houses were thatched, although they probably bore very little resemblance to the immaculately-thatched cottages which we see today. In the absence of a ready supply of reeds, a variety of vegetation would be pressed into service — straw, heather, bracken, gorse and anything else that would keep out most of the rain for a short time before it needed replacing.

Elsewhere in England stone slabs or manufactured tiles were in common use in areas where the materials were readily available, but Shropshire had no brickworks at this time. The local stone was not of a kind that split naturally into tiles, but in the course of the sixteenth century sandstone slabs became increasingly popular, and Pitchford Hall is a fine example of their use.

Tiles, whether manufactured from clay or split from stone, were almost certainly used widely in the towns, where the authorities had a constant anxiety about fire, but it was a long time before any but the richest homeowners could afford them. The irregular tiles on some large country houses look old, but without documentary evidence it is hard to assign a date to them. We need to bear in mind that roof repairs and replacements were a fairly frequent occurrence, and many large houses would always have a

*In the end wall of this cottage at Upton Magna the original triangular roof truss can be seen clearly. In order to gain further height for a second floor the roof has been raised on an additional timber structure, and a window has been inserted between the tie beam and the collar beam.*



mixture of old and new roofing materials. We can be reasonably certain that most cottages in Shropshire did not get a solid roof until Welsh slate became widely available in the early nineteenth century.

## *Chimneys*

The early medieval arrangement, by which smoke from the central hearth escaped through a hole in the roof, survived for a long time. There were several reasons for this. One was the long-standing tradition of the hearth as literally the centre of life in the hall; another was the lack of suitable material for chimney-making, a problem which was not really solved until bricks became easily available.

The trend towards more comfortable living at the beginning of the sixteenth century led to experiments with canopies to channel the smoke more reliably through the roof outlet. In its simplest form the canopy might consist of one bay of the roof turned into a large wattle and daub 'funnel' over the hearth. In other cases the fireplace was moved to a side or end wall, and a timber-framed canopy of wattle and daub or stone was built around and above it.

Fires were not, of course, confined to small grates but were lit in the time-honoured fashion on open stone hearths, so if the smoke was to be carried away and a conflagration avoided the canopies had to be high and wide, projecting well into the room. This necessity produced the 'inglenook', much prized as a feature today, but no doubt inconvenient and draughty for the original occupants who had to sit under the gaping chimney. The fact that so many of them have survived indicates that the fire risk was not as great as it might appear.

The modern chimney was a logical development of the smoke canopy, but throughout the sixteenth century it was largely a prerogative of the richer householders because of construction difficulties. It needed to be carefully built of stone or brick so as not to threaten the roof through which it passed, and thatch presented particular dangers. This explains why, when brick or stone chimneys became common in the larger yeomen's houses, they were usually built outside the house against the end wall. An additional advantage of this method was that the stack did not break the waterproofing of the roof, which no doubt accounts for its popularity in cottages long after the introduction of fireproof building materials.

In the larger yeomen's houses there could be more than one room requiring a fireplace, and a common solution lasting well into the seventeenth century was the 'axial' chimney, placed in the centre of the house and serving two fires back to back. The flue would emerge at the centre of the roof ridge. Being largely shielded from the weather this type of chimney would certainly be more efficient, but the fireplace arrangement formed a large and intractable mass in the living space.

The practical solution that was to become a stylistic feature of smaller eighteenth-century houses (perhaps owing to its symmetry) was the building of separate fireplaces at each end of the house, with internal stacks emerging at the gable ends.



Three examples of brick chimneys added to timber-framed houses. (a) This house in Wem is also of interest because the thin eighteenth-century brick facade shows up so clearly. (b) A cottage by the church gate at Hodnet is almost dwarfed by its stack and trio of diamond-shaped chimneys. (c) The Old Rectory at Craven Arms has had its roof extended to meet its very impressive chimneys. Note the big lozenge patterns in the panels.







In the great stone-built houses of the second half of the sixteenth century the primitive arrangements described above were seldom adopted. Fireplaces were usually 'designed in' when the house was planned (although there are some remarkable external stacks at Acton Scott Hall) and it became common practice to use the same flue for fireplaces on different storeys — hence the 'linked chimneys' so typical of Elizabethan and Jacobean mansions, where a single big stack sprouts several individual chimneys at roof level. Condover Hall has some striking examples. It is noticeable that even where a house is of stone construction the chimneys will usually be of brick, which rapidly proved to be the ideal material.

It must be stressed that when it comes to chimneys Shropshire houses seldom show a neat progression of techniques. Wattle and daub chimneys were being built in poorer houses throughout the seventeenth century, perhaps a hundred years after brick became the standard material for those who could afford it. To confuse the picture further, modernisation could impose a new chimney pattern on an old building, and it is not uncommon to find grotesquely large brick or stone stacks added to small timber-framed houses. Some examples at Craven Arms are described in the gazetteer.

We have seen that in the towns the authorities were making constant efforts to encourage, and where possible to enforce, the use of fireproof materials in their timber-framed houses. Brick chimneys were therefore adopted rather earlier than in the countryside.

## *Windows*

We know that the Romans were capable of making large sheets of glass, but they took the technology with them, and it was probably not until the thirteenth century that the craft of glassmaking was reintroduced into Britain. Throughout the Middle Ages it was very much a luxury confined to the Church and the wealthiest citizens, and it is likely that no secular house in

Shropshire had glazed windows before the middle of the sixteenth century.

All houses had openings to let in some light and to provide an additional escape route for smoke, and before the arrival of glass the usual technique was to cut the smallest feasible aperture and insert woven laths, often in a diamond-shaped arrangement which survived later as the familiar 'lattice window'. There is some evidence of attempted draughtproofing by the stretching of linen across the laths, and shutters would be fixed at night for the sake of security.

The low storey height of most medieval and early Tudor houses produced a square or horizontal window shape. In close-studded construction a special window-frame would be inserted into the vertical timbers, but in post and truss houses the timber panels would usually dictate the size and shape of the window.

When glass was introduced in the county it naturally became yet another status symbol, and the most noticeable development in the town and country mansions of the later sixteenth century is the size and number of their windows, often emphasised by projecting bays and oriels. Ironically the much-prized medieval hall windows were usually the first to disappear at this time, victims of modernisation as halls were 'ceiled' to provide first floor accommodation. This same process produced the dormer window, necessary to allow light into the newly-created rooms in the roof space. (The more straightforward skylight was never really feasible because of weatherproofing problems, and even when these difficulties were solved the dormer continued to be a favourite feature in British houses.)

However large the window opening, sixteenth-century glass manufacturers could only produce small sheets, so the common window structure in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries consisted of mullions (vertical members) and transoms (horizontal members) in wood or stone, forming a framework to support the glass, which was fixed into lead 'comes' or glazing bars. By the middle of the seventeenth century glass was being produced in much larger sheets, making possible the more generous panes that came into fashion with the spread of 'Renaissance' ideas. An accompanying development was the appearance of wooden glazing bars, which became increasingly slender to produce the light and elegant windows that contribute so much to classical facades.

Various techniques emerged in the seventeenth century to allow windows to open and shut. The most common solution in small houses was some form of hinged casement or horizontally sliding section, but the new Renaissance-style mansions increasingly featured a type of sash window in which the lower section slid vertically, to be held open with catches or wedges. The early eighteenth century saw the adoption of the counterweighted sash allowing both sections to move, and this arrangement must have quickly replaced more primitive devices in many large houses. Sash windows were extremely expensive, and the simple hinged casement remained a standard fitting in humbler homes.

It is probable that many cottages were unglazed well into the eighteenth century, because even poor quality glass was beyond the means of most of the population. The early 'crown glass' can be recognized by its blue or green tint and occasional unevenness (it can be seen in the Reader's House at Ludlow).



A medley of windows (a) Ireland's Mansion in Shrewsbury shows an interesting pattern of windows used to produce symmetry and also to direct the attention to a status symbol. The inner pair on the upper floors are plain bays with simple close studding, while the outer pair are canted and patterned with chevron bracing. Even the dormers are heavily emphasized. (b) Lane's Asylum, Ludlow, illustrates that the necessary business of fitting windows into the timber frame did not necessarily produce haphazard results. (c) The Swan at Bridgnorth reveals an attempt to force new-fangled sash windows into a timber frame. Apart from their crooked line, the windows themselves had to vary in size to fit the frame.







It was produced in large circular sheets, and the process left a lump at the centre. This central portion was apparently discarded and sold off cheaply for poorer houses, thus giving rise to the mistaken modern belief that 'bottle glass' was a standard feature of old cottages — a myth that has ruined the windows of many 'restorations'. (While on the subject of misguided restoration it is worth pointing out that bow windows were seldom seen before the end of the eighteenth century, and even then were not a feature of cottages, despite the evidence of Christmas cards.)

## Part 3

# Looking at Buildings: the towns

### *Bishop's Castle*

The centre of the town is a long main street running from the church at the bottom to the site of the castle at the top. The showpiece, however, lies away from the centre, almost opposite the High School near the junction of the A488 and B4385. It is a late sixteenth-century timber-framed manor-house, close-studded with big diagonal bracing. The front elevation shows a hall and cross-wing pattern with what appears to be a smaller cross-wing added later. The main feature is the very pronounced jettying in the urban fashion.

In the main street close to the church many of the buildings are obviously cased timber-frame — the Six Bells, for example, and No 12, now pebble-dashed. The one cottage with an exposed frame here has been excessively modernised. No 2 Church Street is a handsome early eighteenth-century house of three bays, with symmetrical chimneys at the gables and small-paned casement windows. Further up the street opposite the garage is a much-restored cottage with brick nogging (some herringbone and quite recent) in its gable. It is slightly jettied with a massive bressumer and tie-beam, but the general effect is over-quiet.

Church Street now becomes the High Street, and on the right there is a small house with an interesting gable front. The first and second floors are close-studded with an intermediate member, while the gable is jettied and has restored timbers with diagonal bracing. The side is stone-clad but contains a good example of an original chimney. The famous 'house on crutches' (early seventeenth-century) stands beside the Town Hall at the top of the hill — a good timber-framed building, very tall and with its upper floors supported on posts. There is little more of note except the Castle Hotel, an imposing seven-bay stone house of 1719 with a central gable.

### *Bridgnorth*

Bridgnorth is a rewarding place for anyone interested in buildings, the more so because of the general openness of its streets and its hilly geography that provides a variety of viewpoints.

Low Town, to the west of the river, has always been under-regarded, so it seems right to start the itinerary in Mill Street. Several timber-framed cottages at the far end have been cased with sandstone and brick, but one still has timbers exposed, showing vertical studding on the first floor. But the most interesting building is No 48, a very early example of the new fashion in town houses. It has three bays and three storeys, each one with a string course. The windows are sashes except for square leaded-light panes at the top. The most notable feature is the massive eaves cornice, complete with modillions, which makes the hipped roof look like a jaunty hat. At the west end of St John's Street a dignified house has an elegant shell hood over its door — a fairly rare



*A particularly fine example of an early eighteenth-century shell hood over a doorway in Low Town, Bridgnorth.*

feature in Shropshire. Almost opposite is a rather countrified timber-framed cottage.

On the other side of the bridge the Cartway winds its way uphill, and Bishop Percy's House (1580) at once catches the eye. It is a superb urban timber-framed house with a near-symmetrical facade, big triple dormers, two heavy carved bressumers and a carved door surround. The horizontal first-floor windows have mullions and transoms. Its status is emphasized by the wealth of decoration in the panels, including embellished concave lozenges, simple diagonals and curved bracing.

At the top, Cartway becomes Waterloo Terrace, where there is an extraordinary building that exemplifies the early eighteenth-century tendency to stick 'classical' features on to a facade, regardless of architectural accuracy. The giant pilasters on each side of the frontage are conventional enough, but two more have been placed side by side in the centre. In addition there are window-sills with curly ends and two different designs of keystone. The eaves cornice runs below what is evidently a later addition.

A right turn at the High Street leads you towards the Town Hall in the centre of the road. It is a long, dignified building with austere upper timber-framing, erected in about 1650. There is a central dormer and fine oriel windows with carved brackets. Close by is the Swan Hotel, a most interesting building because it is an early eighteenth-century adaptation of an older timber-frame. A heavy bressumer and vertical studding on the first floor are combined with a cornice and modillions. There appears to be a kind of mezzanine floor with crude sash windows of varying sizes to fit the frame.

Beyond the Town Hall Whitburn Street leads off to the left, and two





*This house in Waterloo Terrace, Bridgnorth, is a striking example of the indiscriminate use of Renaissance embellishment in the early eighteenth century. The two giant pilasters placed side by side in the centre have no architectural authority, the window arches and keystones are of disproportionate size, and the builder invented a new kind of curly-ended sill for the second-floor windows. The third floor above the massive cornice is a later addition.*

timber-framed inns face each other across the road. The Road (c. 1646) is long and tall, with triple dormers and plain vertical studding. The King Charles is far more ambitious (and more heavily restored) with its two jettied upper storeys, elongated lozenges on the first floor and concave lozenge panels in the gables.

Back in the High Street and close to the Northgate is Northgate House, a very good specimen of the typical early eighteenth-century town residence — in brick with quoins, five bays, two-and-a-half storeys and a heavy cornice cutting off the attics. Once again there are decorated keystones and a doorway with pilasters and a neat pediment. It is worth going through the Northgate to look at the substantial seventeenth-century timber-framed building beyond. It is characteristic of its time, with emphatic twin gables, close-studding on the facade and cheaper square panels at the side.

Opposite Whitburn Street is Church Street, leading into the 'close' around St Leonard's church. The outstanding feature here is the range of three houses that made up the grammar school of 1629. They form a symmetrical composition, each having twin gables and a projecting two-storey porch. They have undergone varying degrees of restoration, but some of the mullions are original and one house has fixed leaded lights in the gables. Nearby is the prim timber-framed cottage once occupied by the puritan preacher Richard Baxter.



*Bridgnorth's Town Hall is a most impressive example of late timber-framing. Built c. 1650 following a major fire, it had the usual open ground floor for market purposes, and the upper storey was close-studded — an expensive method by that time. The sophisticated windows are a notable feature.*

The southern end of the town is predominantly Georgian, but East Castle Street contains a rarity in Shropshire — a brick town house of the early seventeenth century. The old Governor's House of c. 1633 (now the Apley Estate Office) is near St Mary's church on the left. It has the usual twin flanking gables of the time and a third surmounting the three-storey porch. The windows are horizontal in plan and have drip mouldings — virtually the only embellishment, because the doorway is a totally plain pointed arch.

## *Church Stretton*

It is often assumed that Church Stretton is essentially a nineteenth-century town. In fact there are a number of interesting buildings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries here, most of them in the High Street leading away from the Square. The Square itself has been smartened up and there is little of interest, except perhaps for a narrow house of the very early eighteenth century, of brick with stone quoins.

As you walk along High Street away from the Square the first building on the right — the Raven — has a long timber-framed frontage with some wood painted on. Further along on the right the cross-wing of the Buck's Head has the distinguished look of an early seventeenth-century manor house with stone mullions and transoms. The long, well-restored building on the left was formerly a barn. It stands on a stone plinth, and its square panels are braced by big diagonals at ground-floor level. The plaster in one panel has been helpfully cut away to reveal the wattle and daub. The pebble-dashed front of the King's Arms renders it anonymous, but the good close-studding at the side shows it to be late Elizabethan or early Stuart.

Opposite the Silvester Horne Institute is an interesting brick cottage with quoins and a half-hipped roof, apparently of the early eighteenth century, although its big external chimney seems to date it much earlier. Finally, opposite Cunliffe Road, 'Tudor Cottage' has the appearance of a substantial yeoman's house of the late sixteenth century, with its hall and cross-wing and fashionable jettying, although restoration has given it a rather bland air.

## Clun

The original settlement was around the church, while the later medieval village grew up on the other side of the bridge near the castle.

Starting at the church, the adjacent vicarage is a fine Queen Anne house of well-laid local stone, with an unusually squat hipped roof and a single central dormer — an excellent example of a fashion-conscious yet dignified house with none of the classical bits and pieces added on to showier country houses of the same date. In School Road, on the other side of the church, is a row of four tiny cottages, no doubt timber-framed. It is impossible to date them from their appearance, but they could well have been built or adapted as early labourers' cottages. Just below the church 'Caradoc' is a three-bay, two-and-a-half storey house of the early eighteenth century, with crude lintels over nine-light windows which have a small central casement opening. Beyond the bridge is a cottage of uncertain date but probably late seventeenth century, with flamboyant drip mouldings.

Continue up the hill and turn right into the Craven Arms road. A short distance along on the left is a substantial double-gabled house with the date 1682. The front is pebble-dashed, but the rear section is of stone, and it has a big external chimney. The chimney is again the main feature of Ship House.

*Although considerably modernised, this house at Clun retains the characteristics of a seventeenth-century manor house.*





just before the Methodist Church — a massive and disproportionate stack. Almost opposite the Methodist Church note the old stone slabs on the roof of a small, stone-cased cottage.

Turn up the lane by the Methodist Church to reach the Trinity Hospital, Shropshire's most attractive group of almshouses. They were built in 1618 in grey stone, and like many almshouses were very up to date for their time — Renaissance influence was certainly at work here. The main facade is beautifully proportioned and scrupulously symmetrical with flanking chimneys, end gables and a central gable with a dormer on each side. A Victorian range was built at a right angle and features a short arcade of columns and arches.

## *Ellesmere*

With two exceptions (No 31 Scotland Street and the White Hart), Ellesmere's oldest houses seem to be examples of very functional timber framing, unsophisticated and with no decoration in the structure. In Market Street the former White Lion (mid sixteenth-century) has now become two buildings — one a simple rectangle with strong vertical studding and no decoration, the other a short cross wing that has been much altered. The buildings still have considerable impact in the very narrow street. At the top of Market Street a left turn brings you to No 31 Scotland Street, Ellesmere's best example of timber framing. In fact it is the surviving cross wing of a house that once extended some way towards the town centre, and is a most elegant example of a Jacobean urban house. It is slightly jettied and has diagonal and S-shaped bracing within its substantial main frame. The front door looks original.

If you return to the town centre a walk along the short High Street brings you to Birch Road, where there is an interesting group of timber-framed buildings comprising first a tall shop, with heavy vertical timbers and very plain wide panels, then the much older White Hart with its surprisingly exuberant chevron bracing on the upper storey. The cottages next door are very plain with regular square panels. Return and continue to the end of Watergate Street. Opposite the junction with Church Street an L-shaped timber-framed group catches the eye with its regular square panelling and slight jettying at the front gable, which has had its timbers replaced. Timber framing can also be seen in the side of the house next door, although its facade is now rough-cast. How many other houses in the town have been refaced like this?

Turn left along Talbot Street. The pair of timber-framed houses set back on the right have a very countrified look. One has a wide main frame with strong studding, while the other appears rather jerrybuilt with meagre framing in square panels. Both have later windows fitted into the original framework. At the junction with Swan Hill stands a tiny cottage with its ground floor now below road level. It is a good example of very basic technique, with its wide framing, solid and simple, and brick infill. Later side and rear extensions have been painted to match.

*Nearby:* It is worth travelling the mile or so south of the town to the hamlet of Lee, where Lee Old Hall can be seen from the road. It is a magnificent



*Ashfield Hall, Much Wenlock. A mid sixteenth-century timber-framed wing grafted on to a medieval stone house.*





*These two houses in Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, are of great interest. The 'sag' in the brick facade indicates timber-framing behind, and the facade itself is a naive attempt to achieve the newly-fashionable style of the early years of the eighteenth century. The very tall windows contrast oddly with the insignificant entrance doors.*



*Castle Gates House, Shrewsbury, was dismantled and rebuilt in its present position to make way for what is now the Guildhall. Its appearance owes a great deal to Victorian restoration.*





*Mardol, Shrewsbury. This building is a striking illustration of the effect of jettying. There is a remarkable increase not only in the width but in the height of the upper storeys, producing a very top-heavy appearance.*



*The Higginson School, Whitchurch. This little building received the Baroque treatment quite early (c. 1708). Its quoined and pedimented centre bay has a surprisingly simple door, decorated only by a drip moulding — a throwback to the seventeenth century.*



*Green End, Whitchurch. This was once a fine example of an early eighteenth-century town house. At some point a shop front was inserted barbarously into the facade, and the house is now neglected. Its dominant feature is the splendid doorway with a rare survival of a door hood.*





*A fine example of chevron bracing on the White Hart at Ellesmere.*

example of a small late-Elizabethan manor house, designed to make an impression with fanciful bracing of all kinds covering its three storeys. It is multi-gabled with an odd projecting upper room on the south side. Further down the road is a small farmhouse, timber-framed behind its brick facade and with extraordinarily ostentatious brick chimneys — four linked stacks built in diamond shape, and no doubt original. This was evidently a prosperous farm once. Did the owner go on to build the much grander Lee Hall opposite?

## *Ludlow*

Ludlow cannot match the number and range of Tudor and Stuart buildings to be found in Shrewsbury, but it boasts some outstanding examples of urban timber-framing of the early seventeenth century.

Following the demolition of the notorious Victorian market hall, the area at the castle gate has now become a spacious square showing off the architecture of several centuries. One of the dominant buildings here is Castle Lodge, a fortress-like structure with a sixteenth-century timber-framed superstructure on a fourteenth-century stone ground floor, and we see for the first time the design of concentric lozenges so popular in the town. Almost opposite and set back from the street is No 14, a typical 'new' house of 1728. It is a pronounced rectangle of two-and-a-half storeys in red brick and stone quoins, with an almost invisible roof, a low parapet, segment-headed windows and a door with segmental pediment and fluted pilasters. It makes an interesting contrast with the more mature Georgian houses next door.

At the eastern end of the square there begins a series of parallel lanes which were once part of the medieval core of the town. Most of the buildings here have been cased, modernised or replaced, but a fine, tall timber-framed





frontage survives in High Street. Beyond the Buttercross, where the massive overhanging gable of Bodenham's shop looms in the narrow street, is the inconspicuous entrance to the church. Go in and turn right at the church door along a path which leads to the Reader's House.

The porch here, grafted on to an earlier stone building in 1616, is one of the most beautifully-crafted pieces of seventeenth-century structural work in the county. Widening and jutting from its narrow base, it extends the full height of the house. The door has a richly-carved surround, and the first-floor window is of full width with mullions and a very heavy transom holding leaded-light panes that have the greenish tinge of early glass. Its sill is supported by carved twin brackets (a familiar feature in Ludlow) and it is surmounted by what amounts to a wooden cornice. The window arrangement

is repeated on the second floor. The panels left on view consist of vertical studding and simple diagonal bracing, a restrained background for the rich individual features.

Return to King Street and continue eastwards. Notable on the right is the Old Bull Ring Tavern, occupying two buildings. One is very tall with a second-floor jetty and big twin dormers, while the other (presumably later) is more regular in construction with a similar but more elaborate jetty boasting a moulded bressumer and brackets. It also reveals the common Ludlow combination of panels with concentric and concave lozenges.

At the Bull Ring turn left into Corve Street, where the Feathers Hotel at once catches the eye, as was always intended. Built about twelve years before the Reader's House, it presents an interesting contrast of attitudes towards the possibilities of timber-framing. The Reader's House derives its richness from painstaking and fairly austere craftsmanship, while the Feathers relies on a profusion of superficial decoration. It has been much altered and restored; the doorway is not in its original position, the balcony is a later addition and some of the timber decoration (including the unusual round-arch decoration in the gables) was replaced within the last twenty years. It nevertheless remains a remarkable example of the carpenter's art, with its sophisticated panel embellishments of lozenges and elaborate quatrefoils. Note the pilasters at the door and the window design, which is virtually identical to that of the Reader's House.

Opposite the Feathers is the Bull Hotel, inconspicuous behind a nineteenth-century facade, but in fact much older than the Feathers. This fact can be appreciated by walking into the yard to see its impressive timber-work.

Most visitors turn back here because Lower Corve Street is not mentioned in the guide books. It is a long row of sixteenth and seventeenth-century houses reached by walking down Corve Street to the point where it curves left. On the right here is an isolated timber-framed house of three spacious storeys, slightly jettied with carved figures in the bressumer, and showing again the combination of concentric lozenges and spiky concave lozenges that seem peculiar to the town. The same motifs can be seen in the wide gable of the top house in Lower Corve Street, which turns off here and continues to the Corve bridge. Pride of place, however, must go to York House, well-restored and with its timbers scraped, which has two storeys and three very big dormers. The massive first-floor jetty is bracketed. All the houses in the street have been modernised and some have been cased, but they make an interesting picture of an early suburban development.

Walk back to the Bull Ring and continue straight on down Old Street, which has two notable buildings of the period. The Town Preacher's House is primly symmetrical. This fact, together with its big replacement windows, gives it a Victorian look, although it dates from 1611. Its timbering comprises diagonal bracing and a frieze of concave lozenges. A little further down is the former Lane's Asylum, of sixteenth century date, with later timber-framing added to the stone structure. The framing is fairly plain, but under the dormer window are two panels enriched with a crude version of the round-arch decoration at the Feathers.

From Old Street, Brand Lane leads into Broad Street, dominated by eighteenth-century architecture but with a fine range of older buildings at the

top. Bodenham's Corner is a famous example of jettying technique, and it is worth studying at close quarters the arrangement of a heavy bracket supporting the projecting dragon beam into which the floor joists are set. The rather odd panel decoration here consists of elongated lozenges. Next down the hill comes a shop with a richer facade, although the elaborate bargeboards are Victorian; otherwise the framing is vertical studding on the first floor and panels with spiky lozenges on the second. By contrast the next two buildings are very plain — one has simple square panelling and the other has unusually long studs with an intermediate beam. Finally comes the Angel Hotel, where a fairly basic facade was enhanced by a handsome pair of Regency bow windows. Note how most of these buildings project on posts to form a primitive 'colonnade'.

Half-way down Broad Street, Bell Lane cuts through into Mill Street, and on the way it crosses the narrow Raven Lane, which is of some interest because it contains some jettied houses which have been given flat, boarded fronts. One building (Nos 14-15) has its timbering still exposed in handsome fashion, and is strangely elaborate for a house in a back lane. No doubt of the early seventeenth century, it features a combination of diagonal bracing and small panels with concave lozenges in the twin gables. The jetties on both floors have brackets.

Walk up Mill Street and turn left at the top into Dinham. No 2 is a particularly neat early seventeenth-century house of three storeys. The jettying is only slight, but the bracketed bressumer is massive. The diagonal bracing on the first floor is surmounted by a very elaborate frieze of the popular concave lozenges. This design is continued in Nos 13-14 where the upper storey shows exuberant variations on the lozenge theme and the three gables have small panels with a variety of patterning.

## *Market Drayton*

It is not easy to devise an economical walking tour of Market Drayton, and it is more convenient to deal individually with the streets that lead away from the High Street, which is more like a square forming the hub of the town.

At the top of Stafford Street is the Crown Hotel. Its gable end has been cased in brick and plaster (still leaving a slight jetty) but its frontage in Queen Street is unusual in having square panelling on the ground floor and close studding above. Normally the reverse is the case because of the better load-bearing capability of vertical studs. Further down Stafford Street the outstanding building is the Star Hotel, dating from the second half of the seventeenth century. This is late timber-framing, with twin gables flanking a tall, slender porch. There is some ambitious decoration. The first floor features diagonal bracing forming concentric lozenges, and in the gables the framing is of small enriched panels.

At the eastern end of the High Street, on the corner of Church Street, an early eighteenth-century house has been converted into a shop, but still retains its primitive sash windows on the first floor. From here it is a short walk downhill to Great Hales Street, where the first house on the right — Rylands House — belongs to the Queen Anne period. It is of brick, without



quoins, and in an attempt to make it more imposing a big segmental pediment surmounts the door and a heavy bracketed cornice runs below the attic windows. The odd flattened-arch windows are Victorian replacements for the original rectangular sashes.

Shropshire Street has the most interesting buildings of the period. The Tudor Hotel and Sandbrook's Vaults (the latter known to be of the 1650s) have matching features in their timber-framing. Both have two jetties with carved bressumers and diagonal bracing on the first floor. They also share an unusual feature — a frieze of small decorated panels above the second bressumer. The ground floor of the Vaults is close-studded, but the corresponding section of the hotel has been tastelessly filled in with modern windows above what looks like artificial stone. The Vaults, too, has suffered from over-zealous attention — it is so glossy as to be almost a caricature.

Further up the street on the left the 'Abbot's House' has a typical combination of showy close studding on its street end and much cheaper square panelling at the side. Nearby No 41 is a fine example of a small town house of the very early eighteenth century — five bays with projecting centre, two stories and attics. The tall, narrow windows are typical of the time, but the centre dormer has a big shaped gable fashionable in the late seventeenth century. The entrance is emphasised by fluted pilasters and a pediment. Unusually, there are no quoins.

Then comes the King's Arms, dated 1674 and looking picturesque, but its timbers are not original and it has been much altered. The basic structure of three dormers and projecting porch remains, and a similar structure can be

*The Sandbrook Vaults and its neighbour in Market Drayton — sophisticated late timber-framing of the 1650s. Surprisingly for this date there is no attempt at symmetry, and the elaborate panel decoration harks back to the late sixteenth century.*



seen in the adjacent buildings, which have been variously modernized. Further along on the left, the compact white house with timbering at its top looks fake, but is in fact of the seventeenth century. The timbering consists mainly of a frieze showing a curious form of key-shaped decoration not seen elsewhere in the county. It continues at the side as simple close studding.

## *Much Wenlock*

The Square is the obvious place to start a walk, and the most conspicuous building here is the Guildhall. From a distance it has a uniform appearance, but closer inspection reveals three distinct stages of building. On the left the original small structure of 1577 stands on top of an earlier stone gaol. It is conventionally jettied, with a bressumer supported on projecting joists. The central section with the twin gables is an extension of the 1670s, with stout wooden arcades providing an open market area. The jettying has been matched, but the joists run the other way, and the bressumer is supported on a few massive beams (the brackets seem decidedly inadequate, and were no doubt intended to be ornamental). The gables have considerable ornamentation. The section built over the passageway is a clever piece of Victorian imitation. It is well worth going in to look at the interior woodwork.

Barrow Street, which leads away to the south-east has several houses which are older than they look, but the oddity here is Church House, the timber-framed building at the entrance to Church Walk. It is strangely angled for a building of this period and is said to be of medieval origin. The tall vertical studs are unusual in having no intermediate members.

To the south-west, the High Street is full of interest. The George and Dragon pub is a cased timber frame like several cottages further up the street.

*Cruck construction revealed in the end of a house in Much Wenlock.*



On the right, Raynalds Mansion is an intriguing triple-gabled building dating originally from about 1600. In 1683 John Raynalds added the three bays and the ornamental balconies with balusters of different designs. The decoration in the bays is unique.

Further up on the left, Barclay's Bank has been much altered, but is still a good example of plain, square-panelled timber framing. Ashfield Hall, almost opposite, is a picturesque combination of medieval stonework and later timbering; the tall, narrow gable on the street is plain, but there is elaborate decoration on the big side gable. At the top of the street opposite, the Gaskell Arms is a good plain cottage with square panels and big diagonal braces on the ground floor.

Returning to the Square and taking the road past the Guildhall and church, you arrive at the junction of streets called the Bullring. The timber-framed shop is of interest; the early seventeenth-century rectangular house has been extended by means of a curious bay with a hipped roof, and the adjoining stone stable has sandstone blocks from the Priory ruins at eaves level. A short distance along Queen Street, past the farmyard, is a black and white house with false timber-framing; this unfortunate piece of refurbishing hides the fact that the house is cruck-framed, and the end cruck is clearly visible in the side gable.

The principal road leading from the Bullring is Shineton Street, where a good deal of conservation work has taken place. The outstanding building here is the Old Gaolhouse, timber-framed above a stone ground floor and concealing its medieval origins.

## Newport

Newport is predominantly Georgian and Victorian in appearance, but many buildings in the town centre are cased timber frames — examples can be seen

*The Guildhall at Newport has been much meddled with over the years, but when it was built in 1615 it must have been a prestigious building, reflecting the new taste for symmetry.*







*Beaumaris House, Newport, dates from 1724 and is surprisingly impressive for a small town. The whole emphasis is on the two-and-a-half storey facade, with the low roof concealed behind a parapet. Most of the windows are segment headed with keystones, but those in the centre bay are enriched with elaborate surrounds.*

from the central car park. Of the recognizable buildings of the period, one of the most interesting is the old Guildhall at the southern end of the long main street. Added shop fronts and a variety of alien windows have removed its authenticity, but its twin-gabled facade shows that in 1615 the burghers of Newport had become aware of the fashion for symmetry. The adjacent detached shop is also timber-framed, but appears to have received much Victorian attention.

Further north, beyond the church, the Adams School, with two almshouses acting as lodges, dates from the mid-seventeenth century, but its appearance owes much to a rebuilding in 1821 in an indeterminate Georgian style. A little further down the street is Beaumaris House, an excellent example of the new kind of formal town house of the 1720s — five bays, two-and-a-half storeys, with a low roof, brick parapet, flat-headed windows (the centre ones emphasized by heavy moulding), giant pilasters at each side and pilasters also flanking the pedimented door.

## *Oswestry*

Successive border raids and a series of fires have left Oswestry with few notable buildings of the period, and those that remain have been heavily modernized.

A few yards west of St Oswald's church and standing within the churchyard is Holbache House, presumed to be an early fifteenth-century school but altered over the years and restored again fairly recently. It is rectangular with

a short cross-wing decorated with concave lozenges in the gable. The end gable has simple vertical studs with a design of concentric lozenges, indicating a late sixteenth-century date. The front elevation is slightly jettied on a moulded bressumer, while the rear has square panels with brick nogging.

At the nearby traffic lights in Church Street are two early buildings at opposite corners. One is a low, timber-framed house with square panels, recently restored. The other, currently covered with roughcast, is of mid-seventeenth century date and has obviously had a good deal of attention since. Basically it is a hall range with two unequal cross-wings and an added porch extension at the front. The windows are mainly Victorian, but in the centre of the first floor is a long window-area that is probably original even if the panes are not. At some point (eighteenth century?) fanciful drip mouldings have been added to each side of the west gable. A visit to the tea-rooms provides a close view of the roof timbers.

From the traffic lights walk up Upper Brook Street to the junction with Welsh Walls. Opposite the junction is a fascinating pair of tall houses which demonstrate a very naive attempt at achieving formal style in the early eighteenth century.

In the town centre at the Cross the Llwyd Mansion is dated 1604, but probably incorporated a much earlier building. There are two very substantial stories above the Victorian ground floor, framed with heavy close-studding. The gable end is slightly jettied and has discreet decoration in four small panels, while the long elevation has a much more pronounced first-floor jetty and a traceried four-light window with mullions.

Bailey Street leads away from here, and a short distance up on the left is the town's most characterful timber-framed building — a triple-gabled structure, one gable projecting slightly over a passageway. The Victorians added the attractive bargeboards and no doubt also the carving on one beam, but the unusually tall sliding casements seem earlier. There is some ornamental bracing.

*This mid-seventeenth-century house in Church Street, Oswestry, has suffered alteration over the years, but it illustrates the urban use of twin-gabled symmetry — a dominant architectural feature of the time, shared by farmhouses and manors. The centre of the building has an unusual long window. Note the fanciful drip mouldings in the near gables.*



In Salop Road, next to the Bear Hotel, are the remnants of what was once a sixteenth-century three-bay yeoman's house outside the town gates. The projecting porch has now been ruined by the addition of a ludicrous Venetian-type window.

## *Shifnal*

Shifnal is another town with few timber-framed buildings, but it has one of the county's showpieces of early formal building. Idsall House, set back from Park Street, dates from 1699 and has a most imposing five-bay facade of brick with stone quoins. The main storeys are separated by prominent string courses, but otherwise there are few embellishments. The doorway has the typical hood of the time.

The other buildings of interest are in or near Church Road. Close by the church is Old Idsall House, which appears to be of late sixteenth-century date with a later gabled extension. The older part has a brick-cased ground floor but a vertically-studded upper section containing some very old sash windows. The later section has a stone-dressed gable. The whole building is nicely under-restored. At the top of Church Road two much-modernized timber-framed buildings face each other, and across the main street are the more impressive facades of the Nell Gwynne and the neighbouring range of shops. The pub has four small gables with a variety of decorative motifs, but is otherwise square-panelled. The shops are taller, have five gables and show an ostentatious display of decorative bracing. In each case there has been considerable modernization, especially on the ground floors.

*A contrast in styles at Shifnal between the dignified framing of the Nell Gwynne and its much-decorated neighbour.*







*Substantial close-studding in the side wall of the former Perche's Mansion in Windsor Place, Shrewsbury.*

## Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury is dauntingly rich in buildings of the period, and only a representative sample can be examined here.

Perhaps the best place to start a walk is at the gates of the Library, until 1882 the premises of Shrewsbury School. This ambitious building was constructed in two parts, with the earlier section, dating from the 1590s, at right angles to the main frontage. It features expensive ashlar masonry in high quality stone, and originally had the gables characteristic of the period. They were replaced by a parapet in the nineteenth century. The later section, begun c. 1627, was designed to harmonize with the original wing, but its restrained dignity shows an awareness of the new formal fashion, with classical sculptures on the Corinthian columns flanking the arched entrance and carved friezes forming the string courses. The window scheme is severely regular, and the only frivolous touch is the parapet, apparently copied from the Market Hall in the Square.

On the other side of the road, tucked away next to the monolithic Presbyterian Church, is the Council House Gatehouse. It is also Jacobean and illustrates very well the taste for exuberant decoration that marked the final phase of urban timber-framing. The builder was very conscious of his finely-crafted windows and dormers, and in addition to the usual carving and ornamented panels he flirted with Renaissance ideas in adding blind arcades under the first floor windows and fluted pilasters on each side of the archway.

For an instructive contrast, walk further along Castle Street and turn left into the narrow Windsor Place, where the side of Perche's Mansion is revealed. This dates from the early 1580s and what we see is the side of the original house, which obviously faced on to Castle Street. It is the sort of plain, functional structure that lay behind the elaborate facades of most Elizabethan houses.

At the junction of Castle Street and Pride Hill turn left into St Mary's Place. On the north side the Old Yorkshire House Inn is a fascinating example of a timber-framed building cased with brick in the eighteenth century. The original warping shows through in the drunken line of the sash windows, which must have been installed with great difficulty and certainly with less than elegant results. (Fake 'bottle glass' has now made a regrettable appearance.) The building next door dates from the late sixteenth century and has been much altered over the years. On the other side of the square the mid-sixteenth century Drapers' Hall occupies an unobtrusive position and is unexpectedly restrained for the headquarters of a very rich and powerful guild. The vertical twisted moulding in the panels and the quatrefoil decoration cut into first floor beam are a local characteristic.

St Mary's Street now becomes Dogpole, where the Guildhall (Newport House) stands in a commanding position. It must have been a strangely avant-garde spectacle in 1700 — a symmetrical three-storey house in red brick with stone quoins, with sash windows and hipped roof. This sort of elegance was quite new to Shrewsbury, and it was to be the model for several new houses over the following thirty years. The 'classical' porch was added later — no doubt the original structure had a simple door hood. A few yards further down we are back to timber framing with the Olde House, L-shaped around a small courtyard and altered at various times since its early sixteenth-century construction. Something of its former status remains in its moulded doorcase with flanking pilasters and its showy chimneys. A seventeenth-century side wing was encased in brick.

A left turn and steep descent marks the beginning of Wyle Cop. The varied facade of the Lion Hotel includes a central timber-frame section of pre-Elizabethan date, cased in Gothic style in the eighteenth century. Its neighbour down the hill is of rather more interest. Known as Henry Tudor House, it dates from the mid-fifteenth century (with much twentieth-century restoration) and is of impressive height, with its uppermost jetty coved in a manner more usual in Victorian imitation. Apparently built to provide shops with living accommodation over, it has a remarkable original window of dense tracery which would have lit the hall. The vertical studding would have been the normal method of construction in a building of this age. The adjacent Mytton's Mansion dates from roughly the same period and has the same close studding and long, emphatic jettying of the top storey, but drastic restoration at various times has left few original features.

On the other side of Wyle Cop the seventeenth-century Nag's Head does not look particularly striking, apart from its very wide top jetty and its early eighteenth-century sliding windows, but a glance up the passage beside it will reveal the remains of a medieval Great Hall. What survives from fairly recent demolition is the elaborate screen dividing the Hall from the service passage, the passage itself and the doorways to the service rooms beyond.

Walk across the English Bridge and into Abbey Foregate. Follow the left-hand side of the road into the north-east corner of the Abbey precinct. Prominent here is Abbeydale House, a good example of the sort of restrained, elegant house that became popular in the early years of the eighteenth century — brick construction, prominent but well-proportioned roof, formally arranged windows, discreetly emphasized doorway, and dormers and chimneys reinforcing the symmetry. On the opposite corner is a house of the same period but rather more conscious of classical style. The roof is inconspicuous and the emphasis is entirely on the facade, with its parapet, low top storey, and segment-headed windows.

Pass between these two and up Whitehall Street to reach the Elizabethan mansion known as Whitehall because, it is said, it was painted white to hide the sandstone stolen from the Abbey ruins. It was built in the late 1570s and is therefore contemporary with Moreton Corbet and almost as ambitious, since it is one of the earliest examples in the county of a 'double-pile' house — square in plan and symmetrical on its main sides, apart from an oddly-placed porch. The coursed rubble masonry, the ashlar quoins, the generous mullion and transom windows and the modest but frequent gables give it the appearance of a wealthy man's country house — which it no doubt was when it was built. The central cupola provides the final symmetrical touch.

Return across the bridge and into Beeches Lane, which leads to Town Walls. The outstanding building of the period here is Bowdler's House, built in 1724 and typical of its time — five bays with the outer two projecting to stress the symmetry, red brick with heavy stone dressings, a hipped roof, slender segment-headed windows and a segmental pediment over the door.

Continue along Town Walls and turn right into Belmont. At the corner is an odd little two-storey house with quoins and a pyramid roof, probably of the 1720s. You are now in Shrewsbury's fashionable eighteenth-century suburb, with later Georgian architecture predominating, but there are several interesting examples of late Stuart building. In Belmont, for example, two brick houses of about 1700 are set back behind walls. Belmont House has a hipped roof with twin dormers and a very emphatic cornice with modillions (square brackets beneath). Later houses of this kind would never have had an off-centre entrance obviously designed to conform with the interior arrangements. Note the windows flush with the wall, another feature which very soon disappeared in favour of recessed windows. Next door are the Judge's Lodgings. The facade is squarer, with a newly-fashionable parapet, and the rather cramped doorway has a small pediment which pushes awkwardly between two first-floor windows. Both these houses retain their informality while striving naively towards the new classical style.

Turn left at the bottom of Belmont, but notice the Liberal Club opposite the ruins of Old St Chad's. The frontage to Belmont is pure Georgian, but the side elevation shows a remarkable timber frame with very tall vertical studs, slight jettying and a heavily-decorated tie-beam.

Walk along College Hill and then up Swan Hill. The Admiral Benbow pub has obviously been much altered, but the long, thin windows are typical of the 1720s. Further up the hill Porch House stands out as a very sophisticated example of timber-framing dating from 1628. It is near-symmetrical and has an elaborate doorcase with console brackets. The twin first-floor windows



project slightly and are supported by decorated brackets. The centre gable of the three is larger, giving an added sense of importance. The ground floor is close-studded, but the upper floor has lighter square panels.

At the top of Swan Hill turn right and then right again into St John's Hill. The rather anonymous houses on the right are older than they look. No 17 is seventeenth-century and has a traditional hall and cross-gable facade, with garrets in the roof space. No 16 also dates from the seventeenth century, but has been cased in brick. They make a striking contrast with No 12 (Hardwick House), a very impressive building of about 1700 and a splendid example of urban Baroque style, with a huge cornice cutting off the low top storey and the roof virtually invisible behind a parapet. It is in the usual brick with stone dressings, but has the added grandeur of giant pilasters at the corners. Note the coach houses with big Flemish gables. Hardwick House is the contemporary (and town equivalent) of Cound Hall — a deliberate attempt at magnificence.

At the bottom of St John's Hill turn left and walk past the bus station to Rowley's House. This sprawling sixteenth-century structure is impressive because of its size, but it was probably extended progressively and has had two major restorations this century. The west (bridge) side has two jetties and large twin gables with small windows set into the main frame. The south side has a big, close-studded end gable projecting on to wooden posts, while the

*Rowley's Mansion, Shrewsbury. A sprawling house, extended in stages. Note the redundant roof truss in the gable facing the camera, with notches for the purlins.*



projecting section on the east side is notable for the signs of a demolished wing — a roof truss notched for purlins is clearly visible below the gable. The remaining section on the east side has predominantly vertical studding in contrast to the square panels elsewhere.

Rowley's son built the brick and stone mansion on the north side in about 1620. It is a cheerless sort of building — tall, L-shaped, meanly proportioned, with three storeys and garrets. There are external chimneys and a show of small gables. The mansion was the earliest brick house in Shrewsbury, which may explain the absence of detectable style.

Opposite Rowley's Mansion, Hill's Lane leads into Mardol. At the junction is an early seventeenth-century timber-framed building of three storeys with a heavy bressumer and decorated with baluster moulding. The big twin dormers have a small decorative gable placed rather clumsily between them. Further down Mardol on the opposite side, the King's Head lists alarmingly. Recent refurbishment has concealed its framing and removed most of its character, but it dates from the very early sixteenth century or possibly earlier. Above it, on the corner of Roushill, is a recently-restored building with fine jettying on two storeys and featuring a corner bracket. The timbers are unusually sparse and there is no decoration.

Walk to the top of Mardol into Shoplatch, turn left and then right into High

*Elaborate late-sixteenth-century timber-framing in Butcher Row, Shrewsbury. This range shows the impressive effect on a street front of long, continuous jetties.*



Street. At the corner is the famous Ireland's Mansion, a wool-merchant's house of about 1575. It makes a very conscious attempt to impress with its expensive close-studding, its height (three storeys plus garrets) and its broad facade, but apart from some restrained bracing there is little attempt at fanciful decoration. The most striking feature is the fashion-conscious symmetry, emphasised by the structure of the windows on the first and second floors. The inner pair are plain bays, with the upper jettied slightly over the lower, while the outer pair are slightly canted and picked out with chevron bracing. There are four identical dormers above. On the ground floor two original arched entrances survive.

Facing it across the street is the range of buildings known as Owen's Mansion. The timber-framed section over the department store dates from 1592 and is mainly close-studded, with two mullion and transom windows on the first floor. The storey above has star panels decorating the two bay windows topped by gables. To its right is a later section of 1598, with two big gables and panels featuring a whole assortment of decoration, including curved braces, star panels and cable moulding, producing an opulent effect. The brick section to the left is also timber-framed behind its facade of 1709.

The older buildings lining the Square include two early eighteenth-century houses, but the dominant attraction here is the Old Market Hall. Built in 1596 of expensive stone, it was intended to incorporate the latest Renaissance ideas, with round arches on substantial columns and symmetry on each of the long elevations. In fact it remains a rather homely building, its windows reminiscent of a country mansion and its stateliness threatened by the cheerful parapet.

Moving further along High Street you pass the entrance to Grope Lane, which gives a good idea of the effect of jettying on both sides of a narrow street. The shop to the right of the lane is positively encrusted with ornate panels rather crudely executed, and there is an interesting first-floor bay window with a moulded surround.

Continue up High Street and turn right into Milk Street, where a triple-gabled range tilts and bulges alarmingly. This was once Prowde's Mansion, built in 1568. The construction is predominantly close-studding, and although the first-floor windows are eighteenth-century sashes there appear to be older windows in the gables.

Opposite Milk Street a lane leads to Fish Street, which has several early cottages on the left. Ahead is Bear Steps, a recently-restored group of medieval origin, where a fourteenth-century hall has been reconstructed and is open to the public. Nearby, at the top of Butcher Row, is the celebrated 'Abbot's House', apparently an early sixteenth-century speculative venture comprising shops and accommodation over. The three storeys are emphasised by heavy jetties with elaborate corner brackets and carved or moulded bressumers, and for once the ground floor is of interest because the wooden arcades indicate the original shop arrangement. The building has close studding on the first floor and square panels on the second, and it was given brick nogging at a later date. At the bottom of Butcher Row the 'Greyhound Chambers' are an example of the unifying effect of long, continuous jettying on an irregular building. The first-floor overhang is unusually broad. Once again the frame is close-studded. The five bay windows on the first floor are





*Wenlock limestone seen at its best at Shipton Hall (c. 1587). Note the extraordinary four-storey square porch. The wing on the right is a Georgian addition.*



*Dunval, near Astley Abbots, showing the symmetrical cross wings popular towards the end of the sixteenth century. Note the ostentatious design, with close studding and fine panel decoration.*



*Ludstone Hall, a Jacobean manor house showing the ambitious use of brick at quite an early date for Shropshire.*





*Condober Hall (c. 1598) is the most ambitious Elizabethan house in Shropshire. With its prominent wings and elaborate porch it has the classic F shape, and its symmetry and regular window pattern show an awareness of the new Renaissance fashion. Note the proud display of linked chimneys.*



*Count Hall (1704) was to become the model for a series of Shropshire country houses in the provincial Baroque style. They are characterized by the flamboyant use of classical design and embellishment with little regard for accuracy or pure taste. The dominant features here include a shallow roof which distracts as little as possible from the facade, a pattern of rectangles, the three-bay eaves pediment, the four giant Corinthian pilasters and the segmental pediment over the door. This is the garden front; the entrance front is virtually identical.*





*Bowdler's House, Shrewsbury (1724) is an urban version of the new Baroque fashion. Here the roof remains prominent (the odd dormer windows are additions), but there is a decorated eaves cornice and a facade fussily articulated by four sets of prominent quoins and a string course. The door is elegantly pedimented, and the windows have the tall, slender shape typical of the early eighteenth century.*



*Cruck construction makes an unexpected appearance in Frankwell, Shrewsbury.*

of different shapes and sizes, and there are mullion and transom windows in the storey above.

From the bottom of Butcher Row it is a short walk back to the starting point.

### *Frankwell*

The old suburb of Frankwell across the Welsh Bridge has never been adequately publicized, although it contains several good buildings of the period.

As you cross the bridge you are confronted at once by a long timber-framed range of three storeys with garrets lit by dormers. The close studding incorporates some big curved braces, and the two jetties both have moulded bressumers. The variety of windows includes two canted bays and what looks like a very early sash window. Note the entrance door with bracket decoration. From the same viewpoint you can see a rather similar range to the right down the road leading to the car park. This one has big and elaborate twin dormers and an almost continuous line of windows on the first floor. Again there are two emphatic jetties, and the close studding has both curved and diagonal bracing.

On the left at the bottom of Frankwell is a third long, three-storey range,

and this one also has a massive moulded bressumer, although the jettying is slight. The first-floor windows are obviously fairly modern, but those at the top have heavy mullions and transoms. Next to it, on the other side of the lane leading to the river, is a much-restored house with dormers and storeyed bay windows (probably a later addition). An unusual feature at the far end of the first-floor jetty is a beam set diagonally across the corner as a support.

The Wheatsheaf Inn is respectably old, but has been ruined by huge and ridiculous bow windows. The rear section still shows its drooping square panel construction. Almost opposite the pub is a magnificent facade built on a stone plinth and dominated by twin-storeyed bays with gables containing unusual baluster moulding. Next to it is another good frontage, where the big twin gables have decorative bracing and a frieze of the same baluster style.

Finally walk round the right hand side of the roundabout to the corner of Drinkwater Street, where what appears to be a nondescript Victorian brick cottage displays fine fifteenth-century cruck beams at the side — a salutary warning to anyone confident about dating buildings.

## *Whitchurch*

Whitchurch is not noted for a rich Tudor and Stuart heritage, but it does possess one of the county's most distinguished buildings of the period — the church of St Alkmund, built by William Smith between 1712-13 to replace an earlier collapsed church.

In a commanding position at the top of the High Street, St Alkmund's reveals at once the new post-Restoration fashion in church building. The tower is conventional enough, but the main body of the building is a simple imposing rectangle designed to include chancel and nave in one space. The rectangle is supplemented by a semi-circular porch and an apse to accommodate the sanctuary, and the final touch is a balustered parapet. The interior is very grand indeed. The immensely tall windows were designed to flood the church with light, an effect partly lost since the insertion of Victorian stained glass at the east end and in the south windows. The nave has bold arcades of Tuscan columns and round arches, which do not detract from the sense of uncluttered space, and the classical effect is enhanced by the four giant pilasters in the apse. Note also the columns flanking the vestry door.

The church is an impressive achievement for this date and a striking foretaste of later structures like St Chad's, Shrewsbury, and St Mary's, Bridgnorth.

Before starting down the High Street it is worth walking a few yards along the road north of the church to look at Jane Higginson's School of 1708. It stands at the far end of the Higginson almshouses and is a good example of primitive Queen Anne style — red brick with stone quoins at the angles and flanking the central bay, a pediment over the entrance, symmetrical chimneys at the gable ends, twin dormers, eaves brackets and rather crude six-light windows.

The garage opposite the church gates reveals a common feature of urban timber framing. The gable on to the street has neat close studding while the side (presumably once invisible) has very inferior square panels. The money



was spent on the public facade. The Black Bear at the top of the High Street looks impressive, but most of its framing is modern; the bookshop further down, however, is part of the same range and has its original timbers.

There is timber-framing behind the later frontages of many buildings in the High Street, a fact which can be verified by looking into the side passages. Walkers' shop, just below the Civic Centre has not been cased, and its timbers show a remarkable variety of decoration, with free use of chevrons and curved braces. The shop immediately above it has an early eighteenth-century upper facade with quoins, chimneys and the gables, a brick parapet, crude lintels and a good enriched rainwater hopper. Near the bottom of the High Street the arcades of the old Market Hall, now Barclay's Bank, are reminiscent of its 1596 namesake in Shrewsbury. Above them, however, it is all early eighteenth-century, with a heavy eaves cornice and tall, narrow windows. Directly opposite in a courtyard is the White Bear inn, prettied up to look like a modern fake but in fact dating from the fifteenth century.

Green End now leads off to the left, and a short way along, on the left hand side, is a remarkable house of the early 1700s, rapidly decaying at the time of writing. It has a shop fitted clumsily into part of its facade, which is of three bays. The heavy cornice has enriched eaves brackets, and twin dormers (obviously later) have been added to the roof. Unusually, the centre-first-floor window is narrower to match the width of the doorcase below. But the outstanding feature is the fine wooden door hood — rare in these parts because so many were replaced later in the eighteenth century by porches. This presumably happened to Talbot House, at the top of Green End on the right; otherwise it is an early and naive attempt at 'classicism', with its pediment perched above the eaves, its string courses crudely decorated with imitation brackets and its thick glazing bars. See Weston House, a little further up, for the contrasting sophistication of the later eighteenth century.

# Part 4

## The Countryside: a Gazetteer

A survey of buildings in an extensive rural area like Shropshire has to be selective. The priority has been to include examples of every kind of building style surviving from the period 1530-1730.

Each place in the gazetteer is pinpointed by a six-figure Ordnance Survey map reference. Shropshire covers four map sheets — Nos 126, 127, 137 and 138 — and the appropriate sheet number is given before each reference. Most of the buildings listed in the gazetteer can be seen from public roads; where this is not the case an asterisk (\*) follows the name of the building.

**Note:** The inclusion of a house in the gazetteer does not imply that it is accessible to the public. Where, at the time of writing, a house is open to visitors the fact is noted in the entry, but visiting times may be limited and a preliminary inquiry is essential.

### *Acton Round*

138 637957. Open to the public. This is a restrained and highly-sophisticated Queen Anne house that makes the later Baroque houses look vulgar by comparison. A three-part hipped roof of very original design surmounts a seven-bay facade with plain stone pilasters and a simple segmental pediment over the door. On the garden side the central three bays are pedimented.

### *Acton Scott*

137 456896. The Hall\* is an imposing late sixteenth-century mansion, one of the early country houses to be built in brick. It has rough-and-ready stone quoins, and mullion and transom windows. Perhaps its outstanding feature is the spectacular arrangement of external chimneys on the south-west side.

### *Alberbury*

126 360144. Loton Park is a confusing building, altered and extended at various times, but the south-facing wing on the left with pediment and Corinthian columns was first constructed at the end of the seventeenth century in Renaissance fashion. The wing leading from it at an angle is Victorian. It is worth turning off to see the two large houses just below the church, both characteristic of the period 1700-30. They have unusual casement windows set low in the frame instead of the fashionable sash windows more typical of the time.

## *Albright Hussey*

126 504175. This very unusual house consists of two distinct parts. A tall, narrow brick section has ashlar stone at gable level and big mullion and transom windows with an early seventeenth-century look. Joined to it is a much lower timber-framed section in a combination of vertical studs and square panelling. The panel decoration is mainly concentric lozenges, with one or two quatrefoils. It has been suggested that the building resulted from an abandoned project to replace the timber-framed house with a brick mansion.

## *Alcaston*

137 458872. This is an outstanding example of a sixteenth-century timber-framed manor house, in a sad state of neglect at the time of writing. The front elevation has flanking gables and a sort of tall dormer between them, all of different sizes and producing a totally asymmetrical effect. The square panels have a decoration of concentric lozenges.

## *Ashford Carbonell*

138 526708. Brook Cottage, in the centre of the village, is a good example of a substantial yeoman's house — square-panelled with some diagonal bracing. It has an axial chimney stack.

## *Ash Magna*

126 570399. Ash Hall, near the centre of the village, is an almost perfect specimen of the Queen Anne manor house of the very early eighteenth century — a plain square in mellow brick with stone quoins and a deep hipped roof with twin chimneys, modillions at the eaves, big Corinthian pilasters in the middle bay and a segmental pediment over the door.

## *Astley Abbots*

138 700962. Dunval Hall\*, a short distance to the west, is a fine late sixteenth-century manor house — timber-framed, two storeys, with symmetrical projecting wings but no porch. The windows (horizontal in the hall range) have mullions and transoms. Big stone chimney stacks were added on each side. The timbering is mainly close-studding, but also includes some panels with a unique variation on the lozenge motif.

## *Baschurch*

126 425221. There is a long, symmetrical, double-gabled farmhouse north-east of the church — timber-framed with brick infill. It evidently received its pediment and pilasters in the eighteenth century. Along the lane to the west



of this house is a small, square-panelled cottage of the classic hall and cross-wing type, and at the end of the lane is another, very similar but less restored. They probably give a good idea of the size of the average yeoman's house.

## *Benthall*

127 657026. **National Trust: Open to the public.** Benthall Hall is an attractive example of the native tradition of country house building that owed nothing to Renaissance fashion. Built in ashlar stone in the 1580s, its multi-gabled south front is unsymmetrical and includes a pair of two-storey bay window projections and a sturdy square porch, also of two storeys. There is a third storeyed bay window on the west side. The brick chimneys are finely decorated.

## *Berrington*

126 531068. The outstanding building is Manor Farm, opposite the church. This is a fine example of timber framing from two periods. The early wing on

*The fine stone gateway to the Berwick House almshouses.*





*Church Farm, Boningale, near Albrighton. This early seventeenth-century house must have been the home of a very prosperous yeoman — an extravagant amount of timber was used, and the symmetrical twin gables show an awareness of current fashion.*

the western side has a fairly skimpy frame that indicates a humble beginning, but the later mid-seventeenth century addition is much grander and more expensive with more substantial timbers forming small panels. An attempt was made to achieve a symmetrical frontage with a recessed centre. The west wing was later brick-cased at the side to produce a handsome eighteenth-century facade. The stone tiles appear to be original.

## *Berwick*

126 471148. Berwick House\* is an impressive mansion of about 1730, with the familiar Baroque features of the time — nine bays with giant pilasters at the corners and also flanking the centre bays, a heavy cornice cutting off the attic storey and an entrance with fluted pilasters and segmental pediment. In the grounds is a group of single-storey almshouses\* with dormer-lit attics; they form a continuous range on three sides of a square, and there is an elaborate entrance arch with a segmental pediment. They are of late seventeenth-century date.

## *Boningale*

127 810027. This tiny hamlet has an excellent timber-framed farmhouse a little way west of the church. The twin gables seem to indicate an early seventeenth-century date, and there is some handsome close-studding and discreet panel decoration. It is like a smaller version of Ditches Hall near Wem — undeniably expensive, but unostentatious.

## *Bourton*

137 596964. Bourton Hall Farm, down the lane opposite the garage, has a fine seventeenth-century farmhouse in limestone. It must once have been a small manor house, with its big, irregular gables and impressive central clump of star-shaped chimneys.

## *Broseley*

127 675016. There are obviously several timber-framed houses here behind later facades, but two houses of the period stand out. The Lawns, near the church (John Wilkinson's house and occasionally open) is a substantial house of 1727 with storeyed bow windows the full height of the house on the street front and another large ground-floor bow window at the side. The windows are tall and slender in the early eighteenth-century style. A little further down Church Street, No 20-22 is a large twin-gabled brick house of the early Restoration period. In general appearance it is like a small Jacobean manor house.

## *Calverhall*

127 604375. This is very much an estate village, with a row of almshouses of 1724 next to the church — in fact the row is no longer symmetrical because one end was demolished when the Victorian church was built. The original facade is characteristic of the time, with an emphatic central pedimented section and projecting wings at each end. Modern glass porches have rather spoilt the effect.

## *Chatwall Manor*

138 515975. A modest manor house of c. 1660 in rusticated ashlar stone. A large central gable is flanked by two others of unequal size on slightly projecting wings. The windows are mullioned.

## *Cherrington Manor*

127 666203. A substantial, near-symmetrical house with flanking cross-wings and a storeyed porch. The ground floor is close-studded, but the first floor is elaborately decorated with concentric lozenges and a kind of elongated lozenge design. The gables contain rich quatrefoils.

## *Chirbury*

137 262985. The important building here is the school of 1675, very late for high-quality timber framing. It is reached by walking through the churchyard. Obviously influenced by the new formality, it has neat close-studding with large diagonal braces at the ground-floor corners and no decoration.





*Built in the 1670s, Chirbury school is a very late example of timber-framing. Its formal symmetry is emphasized by the porch and gable in the centre bay.*

Symmetry is obtained with a large central dormer over the entrance porch. There is one external chimney at a gable end.

Also of interest is the pair of cottages opposite the Herbert Arms. They have very regular square panelling and must originally have been of one storey with garrets and dormers. The timbers at the side show how the roof has been raised above the original truss to create a second storey with conventional windows.

## *Claverley*

138 793935. The Vicarage, at the church gate, is a sophisticated timber-framed structure, a neat rectangle with an elaborate jetty supported by carved brackets. The severe close-studding is relieved by panels of chevron bracing. Just below the church Pown Hall is a most impressive manor house, almost entirely close-studded. It is basically a hall and cross-wing structure, with a turret inserted between the two sections. Like the Vicarage it has a bracketed jetty. A simpler form of jetty can be seen on the Crown Inn in the main street.

*Nearby:* The farmhouse of Woundale, one-and-a-half miles to the west, has an attractive example of the kind of tall, open-sided porch that was obviously a favourite feature of some yeomen's houses. Beside the lane half a mile north-west of Woundale is a newly-restored timber-framed house — compact, rectangular, close-studded, jettied with moulded bressumers and carved brackets, and generally very smart for this deep countryside.

## *Cleobury Mortimer*

138 675757. No doubt there are several cased timber-framed houses here, but the two outstanding buildings are of the early eighteenth century. The Old Vicarage, opposite the church, is faced with local stone and has five bays and two storeys, with attics lit by triple dormers. The door has fluted pilasters and

is pedimented. The Manor House, further up the main street is of much more formal structure in the Queen Anne style — seven bays, two storeys, with attics, four dormers and four chimneys precisely set to form a square at the centre of the hipped roof. The facade is surmounted by a very heavy moulded cornice. There are fluted pilasters flanking the door but no pediment — it has possibly been removed at some time.

## *Condover Hall*

126 493060. **Open by appointment in August.** The Hall is one of the most distinguished Shropshire buildings of the period. Completed in about 1599, it is an early example of discriminating Renaissance taste, in the classic E shape formed by symmetrical projecting wings and a storeyed porch. The material is red sandstone. Attic gables are a strong feature, and the big mullion and transom windows were obviously a source of pride, those in the wings being canted. The doorway has flanking columns and a pediment, and the porch is surmounted by a richly-embellished gable. The storeys are divided by a string course and a cornice, and there is an ostentatious display of linked chimneys. Condover church has a fine example of a hammerbeam roof.

## *Cound*

126 553049. Cound Hall\* is described in Part 1. At Upper Cound the early timber-framed houses are overshadowed by nineteenth-century imitations. There is one nicely unsmart house, set in a yard off the main street, with lozenge decoration in the end gable, but the other examples are over-restored. The Cound Lodge inn (570050) is of seventeenth-century origin and has the characteristic twin gables of a manor house of the time.

## *Court of Hill\**

138 601730. An important house because it marks the transition to the Baroque style in the county. Built in 1683 it has seven bays and two storeys, and is of brick with stone dressings. The roof is hipped.

## *Craven Arms*

137 436827. The common assumption that Craven Arms is a collection of functional nineteenth-century architecture created by the railway is not quite right. At its southern end is an old village street which is well worth inspecting. The dominant building is the Old Rectory, a very affluent timber-framed house of two storeys and garrets. It is neatly jettied above its close-studded ground floor, and the upper section features concentric lozenges. Star-shaped chimneys rise above the stone tiles of the roof. The original sixteenth-century structure was given a large external stone chimney, and a short section of roof was extended to make the addition neater. Joined to it is a tiny, single-storey cottage, also timber-framed and stone-tiled. Further

down the road on the right is a range of very low square-panelled cottages that have received little attention from restorers. At the bottom of this enclave is an unusual one-bay square house, with its ground floor cased in stone and its upper section square-panelled. Like the Old Rectory its supplementary chimney has been given what is virtually a separate wing.

### *Detton Hall\**

138 666797. An interesting example of a timber-framed wing added to an earlier stone house of indeterminate age. The rear elevation of the stone section is the more impressive. The timber-framing has brick nogging, and the big side wall is oddly crude as if it was not intended to show — possibly a section has been demolished.

### *Deuxhill*

138 698873. The farmhouse is dated 1601, and was originally of the hall and cross-wing type. Later it was made symmetrical by the addition of another gable. There is a heavy bressumer and some chevron bracing.

*Nearby:* At Eudon George, one-and-a-half miles to the north-west, are two other examples of substantial yeomen's houses.

### *Dudmaston*

138 747887. **National Trust: Open to the public.** A plain and dignified brick mansion built at the turn of the seventeenth century, of nine bays with the centre five bays recessed. The second-floor gables with attic windows are a later addition.

### *Easthope*

138 567952. The square-panelled Manor House in the centre dates from about 1600, but it has been much altered and smartened, with round-headed windows added at some point. Of more interest is the cottage on the other side of the road, which shows off its cruck construction very clearly.

### *Eaton Constantine*

126 596062. Richard Baxter's house in the centre of the village is a notable example of timber-framing, with close studding extending to the second storey and large timbers in the gable forming tiny squares — a very unusual feature.

### *Ford*

126 416138. Next to the church gates is a timber-framed house of the early seventeenth century, of square panel construction, with dormers but no cross wing. To the east of the church Ford House is an exceptionally fine example



of a modest early eighteenth-century country house, built of brick with stone quoins. It is compact and restrained in style, with a Tuscan porch and little adornment, but its symmetrical flanking chimney stacks are an imposing feature.

### *Frodesley*

137 517998. Frodesley Lodge, on its hilltop site, has a square, compact, almost fortress-like appearance. The main section of the house is of the sixteenth century, built in coursed rubble with north and west gables and a semi-circular projection housing a staircase. There is an ornate brick chimney.

### *Great Bolas*

127 647214. The church is of interest as an example of early eighteenth-century rebuilding. The chancel, in rubble masonry, is apparently of the late seventeenth century, but the nave was reconstructed in the late 1720s and now looks very Queen Anne in red brick with stone quoins, an eaves cornice and round arch windows with neat stone surrounds. Stone urns on the top of the tower add the final touch.

### *Great Lyth*

126 458073. An unusual brick manor house of the mid-seventeenth century, with a narrow centre and prominent projecting wings. The wings are surmounted by big shaped gables of a kind fairly rare in Shropshire, and there is a smaller gable over the centre. The corresponding rear gables are plain. Embellishment is confined to string courses of projecting bricks. The windows have a single mullion and transom forming a crucifix — a design popular at the time but seldom surviving eighteenth-century improvements.

### *Grinshill*

126 520234. There are several houses of interest here. Next door to the church Higher House is probably of the 1720s and illustrates the showy effect that became possible with brick when it was contrasted with stone quoins (they are now painted to make them even more prominent). The odd feature is the very steep central pediment that certainly has no classical authority but adds an air of grandeur. Just below the church is the manor house, built in grey local stone and representing the characteristic modest gentry residence of the Jacobean period. It is double-gabled and has strong mullion and transom windows. Further east along the road is the Elephant and Castle. This is an unexpectedly grand inn, obviously modelled on Higher House but with a later porch added. The most interesting house, however, stands by itself on the road to Preston Brockhurst. Stone Grange was acquired in 1617 by Shrewsbury School as a country retreat in times of plague. It is in local



*Albright Hussey. The timber-framed section is reputed to date from 1524, which would make it an unusually early survival. It can be seen to consist of two parts with different panel decoration. The tall brick section was built in 1601, and has characteristic rough stone quoins and mullion and transom windows.*





*The church at Great Bolas. The nave, with its red brick and stone quoins and dressings, was restored in the fashionable style of the 1720s. The tower dates from the same period, hence the vase finials at each corner. Note the coursed rubble sandstone of the medieval chancel.*



*The late-Elizabethan Stanwardine Hall, near Cockshutt. The centre gable belongs to the porch, which is stone-faced. The two narrow gables are shaped, a feature thought to be derived from Moreton Corbet*





*Ewdness, near Stockton. A particularly fine example of the seventeenth-century manor house, built in sandstone and with the usual symmetrical gables. The mullion and transom windows and diamond-shaped chimneys have been preserved.*



*Lower House, Worfield. The square-panelled early section can be seen on the left. It is dwarfed by the seventeenth-century addition, a fine building with typical twin gables and an expensive close-studded frame. Note the strange turret, the two external chimneys and the eighteenth-century sash windows added to the front of the house.*



*The gatehouse at Stokesay Castle, a sophisticated example of late sixteenth-century timber-framing. The jetty gives a handsome effect, and there is a striking contrast between the close-studded ground floor and the more frivolous decoration of the upper storey.*



stone and has no gables, although dormers were added later. The original mullion and transom windows vary in size in a regular pattern. Unusually the main chimneys appear to rise from the facade. The two matched porches have been convincingly merged with the original stonework, but their finials betray them as nineteenth-century. It is believed that there were separate entrances for masters and boys.

### *Habberley*

126 398035. Until recently this hamlet comprised little more than the Hall, a farm and an inn. The oldest part of the Hall dates from 1593, but the two prominent gabled wings on the east side are early seventeenth century, with close studding on the ground floor and diagonally-braced square panels above. A rather ill-fitting stone wing was added in the nineteenth century. The twin-gabled Hall Farm opposite the church may well be of seventeenth-century origin with later modification.

### *Halston Hall\**

126 340316. Like Court of Hill and Acton Round, Halston Hall (1690) represents the type of restrained and sophisticated country house built with an awareness of Renaissance style before the more elaborate Baroque fashion of the 1720s. It is in brick with stone quoins used at the extreme angles and also around the five-bay centre, which is pedimented. There are simple pilasters and a segmental pediment at the door. The roof is not hipped.

### *Hardwick (Ellesmere)*

126 374345. A typical Baroque house of the late 1720s, Hardwick is tall, with seven bays and three storeys, and has flanking service wings resembling small early eighteenth-century houses. The main building has its stone-faced centre emphasized by Corinthian pilasters, with matching columns flanking the doorway.

### *Harley*

126 596015. There are several timber-framed houses in the village, but only two have avoided bland restoration. One is opposite the church gate — a plain, rectangular thatched farmhouse, with brick nogging on one side and plaster elsewhere. On the end gable, at the time of writing, the wattle and daub shows through the plaster and the oak has its rightful silvery hue. The Old Rectory, a hundred yards away, has a big, elaborate end gable with fine close studding and a storeyed bay of square panelling at the side.

### *Harmer Hill*

126 491211. Lea Hall\* is something of a rarity in the county — a modest manor house of the late sixteenth century in brick. It has the twin gables familiar in Jacobean manor houses.





*The Old Hall at Hughley, below Wenlock Edge, shows a particularly substantial square-panelled frame.*

## *High Ercall*

126 595174. High Ercall Hall, next to the church, is a most impressive Jacobean manor house of 1608, the work of the famous Walter Hancock, who built Shrewsbury's Market Hall and probably Condover Hall. The house is L-shaped, of red sandstone with big brick gables diapered in blue. Many of the original mullion and transom windows remain.

## *Hodnet*

127 613286. The buildings of the period lie along the roads radiating from the church gates. A short distance up the Whitchurch road is a large and elaborate timber-framed house, basically a hall and cross-wing in regular square panelling, but with a large porch forced in rather uncomfortably

between them. The porch has vertical studding and decorative diagonal bracing — it also has the date 1546 on a tie-beam, although this seems improbable. There is a single cluster of round chimneys, evidently a later alteration and seen elsewhere in the village,

Along the Market Drayton road are several timber-framed houses, the most interesting being a small thatched cottage with regular square panels and big braces at the ground floor. It is so low that the ground- and first-floor windows are hardly separated. On the church side the frame is very distorted, and later windows have been installed with some difficulty.

The cluster of cottages at the church gates seem to have been Victorianized, although the one nearest the gates has a massive external stack with three chimneys. At the top of the main village street, on the right, a big early eighteenth-century house has interesting old tiles. Further down on the left is a pleasant row of neat, low brick cottages dated 1690, erected for estate workers and an early example of this kind of terrace. The two timber-framed cottages at the bottom of the hill are intriguing. They are unusually tall and square, with a very shallow roof pitch, and could well be examples of eighteenth-century timber-framing that has escaped casing.

Finally Church Street contains a row of cottages that are no doubt cased timber frames. One bears the date 1669.

## *Hughley*

138 565980. Two hundred yards west of the church beside the road is an excellent example of a small, functional timber-framed manor house of the late sixteenth century. The square panelling of the end gable has concave lozenge decoration of a kind fairly rare in remoter country areas, and the front has a storeyed bay. Any gloss added by the Victorians has long been lost, and at the time of writing it is attractively under-restored.

## *Kinlet Hall\**

138 707812. Another Baroque mansion of the late 1720s, built by Francis Smith of Warwick. Red brick with stone dressings, seven bays plus service wings, two-and-a-half storeys with attics above the cornice. The main door is pedimented and has columns rather than pilasters.

## *Knockin*

126 334223. Top Farm, at the west end of the village has an original timber-framed central portion with some close studding and rich decorated panels. This, together with the jetty and carved bressumer, gives a remarkably opulent appearance to a remote farmhouse.

## *Langley Chapel*

126 535001. **Open to the public.** There is some doubt about the building date of the chapel — 1564 or 1601 seem to be the possibilities. It sits on its own in a field, a rectangle of ashlar construction with a belfry. The original interior



*The Horseshoe Inn, Llanyblodwel, is excessively picturesque, thanks to the warping of what seems to have been a fairly primitive timber frame.*

furnishings are of great interest. The reading desk is like a big box pew, while the small pulpit is movable, and apart from one or two box pews for the gentry the seating is uncompromisingly severe. The east end has a typical puritan arrangement of small communion table (no altar) surrounded on three sides by kneelers. The chapel also provides a good opportunity to study an Elizabethan timber roof. The exterior shows the technique for laying stone roof tiles; the largest are at the eaves, where their weight is best supported, and they get progressively smaller towards the ridge.

## *Leaton*

126 469184. At the junction with the B5067 is a good example of an unpretentious late seventeenth-century farmhouse in brick with impressive external chimneys.

## *Little Stretton*

137 443918. Most of the houses of the period here have lost their character through modernization. At the south end of the village, the Malthouse is a hall and cross-wing range with square panels featuring curved and diagonal bracing.



## *Llanyblodwel*

126 240229. Tucked away beside the River Tanat and close to the Welsh border, the Horseshoe Inn was presumably once a farmhouse. It has an unusual square projection at the front and is framed in fairly crude square-panelling with brick nogging — an example of a remote house that conforms to no general pattern. Opposite is a low, single-storey cottage with a garret, timber-framed with stone casing.

## *Longford (Market Drayton)*

127 646339. The Old Hall is an imposing seventeenth-century manor house with symmetrical twin gables and a central dormer. The framing is regular square-panelling with brick nogging, and the gable ends have large external stacks with diamond-shaped chimneys. The house has been much smartened up.

## *Longnor*

126 486005. Longnor Hall dating from 1670, is another example of the sort of elegant mansion built by men of taste before the Baroque style took over. It is of seven bays, in brick with stone dressings, with twin dormers in the hipped roof. The big shaped gable at the centre would not have been a feature of the original design. The doorway is surmounted by a segmental pediment on Ionic columns.

## *Loppington*

126 473294. The Hall is an unusually plain house of the early eighteenth century. The doorway has fluted pilasters, a segmental pediment and a fanlight (no doubt a Georgian addition) but otherwise there is no embellishment. The attic windows have early sliding casements. The most interesting building here is the single-bay cruck cottage with an incongruous modern roof, beside the B4397 on the southern edge of the village.

## *Ludford*

137 514741. The hamlet faces Ludlow across the Teme bridge. Beneath the church a tiny enclave includes a fine timber-framed house with unusual external chimneys. Close by is the St Giles Hospital, a short row of almshouses of ancient foundation but apparently rebuilt in the seventeenth century in symmetrical style with three large dormers and very decorative brick chimneys (best viewed from the churchyard). Behind the church the former Ludford House is something of an architectural jumble with Elizabethan and Jacobean features. A mixture of stone and timber-framing, it has clumsily-set external chimneys and bay windows, the lower one with stone mullions and transoms. A projecting porch at the end has stone piers



*St Giles' Hospital, Ludford. Obviously altered, but in the characteristic almshouse style of the seventeenth century. The timber-framed house visible in the background is a richly-decorated former inn.*

supporting a timber-framed upper section with S-bracing (rare around here). Most of the upper floor is timber-framed with brick nogging. The most spectacular feature is the set of huge external chimneys facing on to the main road.

## *Ludstone*

138 800946. Ludstone Hall is a Shropshire rarity — a genuine Jacobean country mansion with probably the finest seventeenth-century brickwork in the county. Basically it is a larger version of the manor houses of the time, having a symmetrical facade of projecting gabled wings with pronounced jetties and a third central gable, but there are two unusual refinements; the middle of the facade consists of a semi-circular projecting bay with a balustraded top, and the gables are elegantly shaped. The windows have mullions and transoms. From the east there is an interesting view of the impressive chimney stacks.

## *Marche Manor\**

126 334105. A well-preserved timber-framed manor house of 1604, with a cross-wing decorated with concave lozenges.

## *Mawley Hall\**

138 688754. **Open by written appointment with the administrator.** Another house attributed to Francis Smith. It was built about 1730 and is a good

example of the Shropshire Baroque style. Of nine bays, with the three-bay centre emphasized by giant pilasters and an elaborate pediment. There are giant pilasters also at the corners in the Cound Hall style. The attic storey is cut off by a deep cornice.

## *Melverley*

126 333166. The church is timber-framed and probably of the very early sixteenth century. It is a simple rectangle of fine close-studded construction, with a small square-panelled belfry. It was considerably restored in the nineteenth century, but the interior woodwork is still worth studying.

## *Minsterley*

126 374050. The church was built in 1689 of red brick with stone dressings, and its design was obviously influenced by the new Baroque fashion, which is exploited with cheerful abandon. As at St Alkmund's, Whitchurch, the plan is a rectangle with no division between nave and chancel. Most of the decoration went into the west facade, which is bounded by giant pilasters surmounted by a narrow segmental arch. The door is similarly framed, with the addition of a wide frieze, and above it is a window with carved pilasters. The otherwise homely belfry is given a classical touch by columns at each corner and pediments at the top.

## *Moreton Corbet*

126 562232. **Open to the public.** The ruined house next to the castle is the earliest attempt in Shropshire at full Renaissance style. Started by Andrew Corbet in 1579, it was of two storeys, the upper one higher than the ground floor, a style made fashionable in houses like Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire. The windows have mullions and transoms. The principal decorative features are attached columns rather than pilasters, distinctive shaped gables, elaborate carved string courses and pediments over the attic windows.

## *Norton-in-Hales*

127 692385. Outside the village, off the lane to Adderley, is Brand Hall\*, an elegant seven-bay house of the very early eighteenth century in brick with stone dressings. The centre three bays have a pediment with giant pilasters.

## *Pitchford Hall*

126 526042. Shropshire's only surviving timber-framed country mansion, the Hall was built in the 1560s. The original front is now on the garden side and consists of a central range with long projecting wings. The fine framing has





*Pitchford Hall. Shropshire's finest timber-framed house, undergoing repairs when photographed. The picture shows the two long cross wings which help to give the house its E shape. Note the different framing and decoration in each wing. Much of the roof retains its original tiles.*

close-studding on the ground floor and a richly-decorated upper storey with variations on diagonal bracing — chevrons, concentric lozenges etc. The roof has early stone tiles and ornate chimneys.

### *Plaish*

138 529964. Plaish Hall is important as the first brick building in Shropshire. The building date is not precisely known but may be c.1540. It is a plain hall house with two projecting gabled wings, mullioned and transomed windows and decorated chimneys. The brickwork has a blue diaper pattern, and large stone quoins reinforce the angles.

### *Prees*

126 556335. At the southern end of the village street is a very interesting timber-framed house that may originally have been of a single bay, later extended back from the road. The side timbers are rough-and-ready square panelling, but the street gable-end is very richly decorated with fine chevron bracing and quatrefoil panels. The gable itself is jettied and bears the date 1611, although this may be the date of a face-lift.

### *Preston Brockhurst*

126 537247. The stone-built Manor dominates the village — a most impressive late seventeenth-century gentry house, triple-gabled, with slightly

projecting wings and a storeyed porch with balustrade. It is the sort of plain, dignified house that Shropshire gentlemen were building when the Renaissance was taking over elsewhere in the country. Below the Manor and beside the main road is Preston Farm, a long timber-framed house with a central chimney stack, and next to it is another house with a leaning gable facing the road. Both these houses have very substantial main frames forming square panels with brick infill.

### *Preston on the Weald Moors*

127 681154. Tucked away near the church is the magnificent Preston Hospital, built in about 1725 with money left by Lady Catherine Herbert. It is a most elaborate example of the new taste for classical formality. Approached between austere lodges and a short avenue, the main buildings lie behind fine Coalbrookdale railings and form three sides of a square. The central building is the hall, with giant pilasters, tall arched windows and a pedimented door. On each side the residential wings stand at right angles for twelve bays then curve away to pavilions. The main feature of each wing is an open arched front. It is certainly the most impressive set of almshouses in the county and an astonishing structure to find in a small village.

### *Quatt*

138 756882. Opposite the church is the Dower House. Built in the first years of the eighteenth century it is a good example of naive aspiration towards the new classical fashion. The nine bays are not as impressive as they should be because the windows are set too close together, and there is no central entrance. Instead two doors occupy bays three and seven; they each have fluted columns (rather eroded) and a strange upright scroll pediment. The hipped roof contains two dormers with arched windows and is marked by a bracketed eaves cornice.

*The Dower House, Quatt. A handsome early eighteenth-century house with fashionable hipped roof and slender sash windows. Apparently the original house consisted of the five bays on the right, with a door in the centre. Four bays were added, providing a second entrance.*



## *Roden*

126 575165. There is an interesting block of timber-framed cottages, very under-restored, opposite the village shop. The building appears to comprise a late sixteenth-century hall and cross wing with a later extension of brick. The older part has vertical studs with some decorative bracing, and a later dormer appears to have been added, perhaps when the hall was ceiled. The extension forms a separate cottage, and the group could be the result of an eighteenth-century conversion to provide labourers' accommodation.

## *Rushbury*

137 515920. At the extreme northern end of the village is Rushbury Manor, a model of discreet restoration. It is neat and symmetrical with triple gables. The ground floor is stone-cased and the upper storey (slightly jettied) has good close-studding. There is a big external chimney.

## *Ruyton-XI-Towns*

126 395222. At the eastern end of the village next to the bridge is a substantial sixteenth-century farmhouse, square-panelled and with a jetty and bracketed bressumer (quite rare in the country). There is no cross wing. Small first-floor windows are fitted into the panels and the chimney is in the axial position.

## *Shipton*

137 561920. **Open to the public.** Shipton Hall dates from 1587 and is roughly contemporary with Wilderhope Manor. Built in local limestone it reveals an awareness of Renaissance fashion with its hall and twin cross-wings, but the most prominent feature — the towering square porch — breaks the symmetry dramatically. As at Wilderhope, the screens passage dictated the position of the front door, and consequently the tower had to be forced awkwardly into an angle. The cross-wings have impressive mullion and transom windows.

## *Stanwardine Hall*

126 429278. A mansion of the 1580s, mainly in brick, with a very unusual facade. There is a storeyed porch in stone at the centre and an almost identical projection to one side. Both have tall, narrow shaped gables dressed in stone. At the other end of the house is a typical Elizabethan cross-gable, leaning slightly. One would assume that the shaped gables were a later addition but for the fact that they closely resemble those at Moreton Corbet. In fact, Stanwardine is reputed to have been built by Andrew Corbet's brother, who may have tried to repeat the design.



## Stockton

138 729997. Beside the main road, the Hundred House Hotel is an early eighteenth-century house of five bays and two storeys with flanking chimney stacks. The thatched, timber-framed barn in the yard looks old but is probably eighteenth-century like the larger ones behind it. Down Village Road opposite is a small timber-framed house with red brick nogging and thatched in a twee Hansel and Gretel style that is far from authentic. The former rectory beside the isolated church is a most handsome early eighteenth-century house, unusual in having lower supporting wings.

*Nearby:* Ewdness House\*, a mile down the Bridgnorth road, is an important example of a substantial mid seventeenth-century farmhouse. It is a long house with a brick centre and gabled wings faced with sandstone. It has the usual mullion and transom windows of the time, but the outstanding feature is the pair of massive external chimney stacks placed symmetrically at each end. The chimneys themselves are very elaborate.

## Stokesay

137 436817. **Open to the public.** The castle has been mentioned in Part 1. The relevant building of this period is the gatehouse, probably the most charming sixteenth-century building in Shropshire. It rests on a stone base rising from the moat, and is jettied on all sides with moulded bressumers. The front elevation is symmetrical with a dormer over the archway, while the castle side has an oriel window. The ground floor has plain close-studding, with windows let in rather arbitrarily, and the upper storey is square-panelled with big lozenge decorations and some carved timbers. The gables have curved braces and concave lozenges. The exuberant decoration continues in the star-shaped chimneys and on the arch, which has wooden fluted pilasters and a heavily-carved lintel.

## Stoke-upon-Tern

127 638280. Just outside the village on the Hodnet road is Petsey, a big manor house of the early seventeenth century demonstrating three different styles of timber-framing. The east wing has conventional square panels, the west has short vertical studs with an intermediate beam, while the centre has the type of long, storey-height close-studding rarely seen in the western counties. There is an unusual diagonally-set stack with linked chimneys at the side of the cross-wing.

## Thonglands\*

138 549891. A very isolated manor house, mainly of stone but with a timber-framed cross-wing, quite elaborately decorated with concentric and concave lozenges.



*Petsey, near Stoke-upon-Tern, dates from the 1630s and shows that even at this date owners who were sufficiently fashion-conscious to want a symmetrical house could still delight in the decorated panels of an earlier age.*

## *Treflach*

126 270256. The Hall is a manor house of about 1700 in grey coursed rubble with quoins. It has a hipped roof and twin projecting gables, but the big external chimney stack is at odds with its attempts at sophistication.

## *Upton Cresset*

138 656925. **Open to the public.** The earliest part of the house dates from the 1540s and was probably the second experiment in brick construction after Plaish Hall. A later section was added in 1580. The house is simple, with plain gables, embellishments being confined to elaborate chimneys and blue diaper work in the brick. The separate gatehouse of 1580 has twin polygonal turrets and windows with brick mullions and transoms.

## *Upton Magna*

126 553125. There are several timber-framed buildings in the centre of the village, including a cruck cottage undergoing drastic renovation at the time of writing. Another cottage nearby shows the effect of raising a sixteenth-century roof — the original roof truss is clearly visible in the gable.

## *Wem*

126 515290. Most of Wem's pre-eighteenth-century buildings were destroyed by fire. Those that remain have been heavily restored and have lost most of their character. The two best examples are a square-panelled timber-framed

house on the main street to the east of the church and a rather superior, close-studded house in New Street, with a projecting gabled porch. In Noble Street there are several cottages with brick facades and timber-framed sides, and some early eighteenth-century houses at the entrance to the Brewery.

*Nearby:* Aston Hall, one mile east of Wem, is a fine example of a substantial Elizabethan farmhouse with a combination of close-studding and decorated panels. Beside the B5065, two miles east of Wem, is Soultan Hall, a three-bay, three-storey cube in brick with flush stone quoins, mullion and transom windows and a set of three linked chimneys at each corner. The almost invisible roof has a parapet, and the front door is surmounted by an unusually tall open pediment with carved heraldic devices. The house is basically of the late 1660s, and the gables that were almost universal at that time were removed in the eighteenth century to remodel the house in more fashionable form.

One mile west of Wem beside the B5063 is The Ditches Hall. In spite of additions and a general smartening-up it retains its basic shape as a Jacobean manor house of 1612 — one of the best examples of lavish close-studding in the county. The end gable has some discreet diagonal bracing and the projecting, two-storeyed porch is a striking feature.

## *Whittington*

126 326314. The brick house next to the church on the Ellesmere road appears to be of late seventeenth-century date. It has two gables, one in English Bond and one in Flemish. The windows on the churchyard side seem to have been fitted into a timber frame.

## *Wilderhope Manor*

138 546928. **National Trust: Open to the public.** A late sixteenth-century manor house in random rubble construction, Wilderhope represents the English domestic tradition unaffected by Renaissance ideas. There is no attempt at symmetry; the four gables are irregular, and the two-storey porch is squashed awkwardly against one gable, no doubt to coincide with the layout of the hall, which is lit by a big bay window. There are mullion and transom windows, stone tiles and flanking chimneys.

## *Worfield*

138 758957. You have to search to find the old village street, which contains several small timber-framed cottages. The notable building here is Lower House, opposite the church gate. It is in two parts; the lower, more rambling house with its humble square panelling looks to be of the late sixteenth century, while the newer seventeenth-century structure is much taller and more formal with the usual twin gables and a smaller intermediate one containing a round window. It is close-studded with no embellishments. The





*Rushbury Manor. A splendid example of plain, dignified timber-framing with substantial diagonal braces. Note the big external chimney. The three-gabled symmetry indicates an early seventeenth-century date.*

unusual features are the square turret at one end and the two big sandstone chimney stacks set virtually side by side.

Davenport House was built in 1726 and is in the familiar Baroque style of Francis Smith, although fairly restrained: nine bays plus service wings, two-and-a-half storeys with the attics above the cornice, red brick with quoins rather than pilasters. The entrance porch is a later addition.

# Glossary

This is not a general architectural glossary. It contains only those terms used in the text and applicable to Shropshire buildings of the period.

**Apse:** A semi-circular extension to a church, often accommodating the sanctuary or a chapel behind it.

**Arcade:** A series of arches carried on columns.

**Ashlar:** Smooth-faced building stone cut to precise right angles. Used in very high-quality building work either as structural stone or as a facing for inferior material.

**Attic:** The top storey of a house, usually lower in height than the others.

**Axial chimney:** A chimney placed to serve two fires back to back.

**Baluster:** One of the vertical posts, often shaped, supporting the top rail of a Balustrade.

**Baluster moulding:** A form of panel decoration resembling balusters found on some timber-framed buildings.

**Balustrade:** A parapet of wood or stone comprising vertical posts supporting a rail.

**Bargeboards;** Decorative boards fixed to the gables of a house to conceal structural timbers. Very often a Victorian addition to an earlier house.

**Bay:** 1. In a timber-frame house a bay is the area between pairs of wall posts supporting a tie-beam or roof truss. A building with three pairs of wall posts has two bays.  
2. This term is also used to describe the arrangement of a house facade where the windows are regularly spaced horizontally and aligned vertically. The number of bays is the number of vertical window groups along the facade. The entrance door normally occupies a bay whether or not there is a window above it.

**Bay window:** A projecting window on the ground floor. If the projection includes windows above it is known as a storeyed bay window. A projecting window on an upper floor only is an oriel window. A bay window with a regular curve is called a bow window.

**Bond:** A method of laying bricks.

**Brace:** A piece of timber designed to prevent the distortion of a framework.

**Bressumer (or Bresummer):** In timber-framing the beam into which the vertical timbers of an upper storey are jointed. It usually forms part of a Jetty.

**Canted bay window:** A bay window in the form of a half-hexagon or half-octagon.

**Comes:** The strips of lead used to hold glass in leaded-light windows.

**Cased:** A term used of a timber-framed house which has received an outer 'skin' of stone or brick.

**Close-studding:** A method of timber-framing involving vertical timbers set at narrow intervals.

**Colonnade:** A line of columns.

**Common rafter:** A rafter supported on Purlins.

**Cornice:** A projecting decorative moulding running horizontally across a facade, often at the eaves but sometimes beneath the attic windows.

**Cross wing:** A wing built at right angles to the main section or hall range of a house (most often occurring as an extension of the hall in a medieval or Elizabethan house). The gable thus added to the facade of the house is called a cross gable.

**Crucks:** Pairs of heavy structural timbers, rising from the ground and usually curved and meeting at the top, used to support the walls and roof of early timber-framed houses.

**Diaper work:** A form of decoration usually found on walls, roofs or chimneys, consisting of a repeated pattern of diamond shapes. (An effect often obtained by using bricks of a different colour.)

**Dormer:** A projecting window designed to light a roof space and having its own roof structure.

**Eaves:** The overhanging edge of a roof, often emphasized in classical architecture by the addition of a cornice.

**Finial:** A decorative feature, often in the form of a spike, placed at the top of a gable. (Usually a Victorian embellishment.)

**Fluting:** A pattern of vertical grooves in a column or pilaster.

**Garret:** A room formed within the roof of a building.

**Hall range:** In houses derived from the common medieval pattern the hall range is that part of the house containing the principal room or hall, its service rooms and the passage between them. Often extended by the building of one or more cross wings.

**Hammerbeam roof:** A type of roof which features arched timbers braced on short beams projecting from the walls.

**Headers:** Bricks used with their length into the wall so that the ends show on the exterior.

**Hipped roof:** A roof with all four sides sloping.

**Jetty:** An upper storey projecting over a lower one, usually on timber-framed houses.

**Joist:** A length of timber fixed between walls to support floorboards.

**Lintel:** A length of timber or stone placed across the top of an opening in the wall in order to support the section of wall above.

**Lozenge, concave lozenge, concentric lozenge:** Decorative motifs in timber-framing.

**Modillions:** Brackets resembling square blocks, set at close intervals under a cornice or pediment.

**Mullion:** A thin length of stone or timber dividing a window-space vertically.

**Nogging:** Bricks used to fill the panels of a timber-framed house.

**Oriel:** See Bay Window.

**Palladian:** A style of Renaissance architecture based on the ideas of the Italian architect Palladio and first popularized in England by Inigo Jones.

**Parapet:** A low wall guarding a drop. Used particularly on bridges and above the eaves of houses.

**Pediment:** A feature in the form of a shallow triangle over a door or window. If the sloping sides do not meet at the apex it is called an open pediment. A similar feature designed with curved lines is called a segmental pediment.

**Pilaster:** A projecting vertical strip of stone or wood, designed to give the effect of a column half-sunk into the wall. The term 'giant pilaster' is used when the feature extends to the full height of a facade.

**Portico:** An impressive entrance porch comprising a roof supported on columns.

**Principal rafter:** The part of a roof truss designed to carry the weight of the Purlins.

**Purlins:** Long, horizontal roof members jointed into the principal rafters and designed to support the common rafters.

**Quatrefoil:** A decorative motif in timber-framing.



**Quoins:** The dressed stones reinforcing the external corners of a brick or stone building. They often project from the wall surface, in which case they are known as rusticated quoins.

**Rafter:** See Principal rafter and Common rafter.

**Random stonework:** A stonelaying technique where no attempt is made to lay the stones in courses.

**Roof truss:** See page ??.

**Round-headed:** See Segment-headed.

**Rubble masonry:** Building stone that is unfaced or only roughly faced.

**Rustication:** The practice of cutting grooves between stones in ashlar work to create the appearance of neat mortar joints. If only the horizontal joints are cut it is known as banded rustication. The term is sometimes applied to the technique of cutting grooves or holes on the surface of dressed stone as a form of decoration. See also Quoins.

**Screens passage:** In a hall house the passage dividing the main hall from the service area. Thus called because it was usually separated from the hall by a screen rather than a wall.

**Segment-headed:** Used of doors or windows slightly curved at the top. In Round-headed windows or doors the curve is semi-circular.

**Segmental pediment:** See Pediment.

**Sill:** A length of wood or stone forming the base of a window or door opening. In timber-frame construction it is the heavy beam forming the base of the structure into which the vertical timbers are jointed.

**Spere truss:** A screen dividing the Screens Passage from the hall in a medieval or early Tudor house. Usually an elaborate feature.

**Stretchers:** Bricks used so that their long sides appear on the exterior.

**String course:** A projecting moulding on the facade of a house, forming a horizontal dividing line between storeys.

**Strut:** A length of timber designed to keep two other timbers apart.

**Studs:** Vertical members in a timber-framed house.

**Tie beam:** A beam designed to prevent the walls of a house from moving apart under the weight of the roof.

**Transom:** A horizontal length of wood or stone dividing a window space. Used with Mullions.

**Wall-plate:** A length of timber laid along the top of a wall into which joists, rafters etc are jointed.

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